THE POEMS

OF

S. T. COLERIDGE.

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PREFACE.*

COMPOSITIONS resembling those of the present volume are not unfrequently condemned for their querulous egotism. But egotism is to be condemned then only when it offends against time and place, as in a history or an epic poem. To censure it in a monody or sonnet is almost as absurd as to dislike a circle for being round. Why then write Sonnets or Monodies? Because they give me pleasure when perhaps nothing else could. After the more violent emotions of sorrow, the mind demands amusement, and can find it in employment alone: but full of its late sufferings, it can endure no employment not in some measure connected with them. Forcibly to turn away our attention to general subjects is a painful and most often an unavailing effort.

> "But O! how grateful to a wounded heart
> The tale of misery to impart—
> From others' eyes bid artless sorrows flow,
> And raise esteem upon the base of woe."
>
> SHAW.

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* To the first and second editions.

scribe them, intellectual activity is exerted; and from intellectual activity there results a pleasure, which is gradually associated, and mingles as a corrective, with the painful subject of the description. "True!" (it may be answered) "but how is the Public interested in your sorrows or your description?" We are for ever attributing personal unities to imaginary aggregates. What is the Public, but a term for a number of scattered individuals? Of whom as many will be interested in these sorrows, as have experienced the same or similar.

"Holy be the lay
Which mourning soothes the mourner on his way."

If I could judge of others by myself, I should not hesitate to affirm, that the most interesting passages in all writings are those in which the author developes his own feelings? The sweet voice of Cona* never sounds so sweetly, as when it speaks of itself; and I should almost suspect that man of an unkindly heart who could read the opening of the third book of the Paradise Lost without peculiar emotion. By a law of our nature, he, who labours under a strong feeling, is impelled to seek for sympathy; but a poet's feelings are all strong. *Quicquid amet valde amat.* Akenside therefore speaks with philosophical accuracy when he classes Love and Poetry, as producing the same effects:

"Love and the wish of Poets when their tongue
Would teach to others' bosoms, what so charms
Their own." *Pleasures of Imagination.*

There is one species of egotism which is truly disgusting; not that which leads us to communicate

* Ossian.

our feelings to others, but that which would reduce the feelings of others to an identity with our own. The atheist, who exclaims, "pshaw!" when he glances his eye on the praises of Deity, is an egotist: an old man, when he speaks contemptuously of Love-verses, is an egotist: and the sleek favourites of fortune are egotists, when they condemn all "melancholy, discontented" verses. Surely it would be candid not merely to ask whether the poem pleases ourselves, but to consider whether or no there may not be others, to whom it is well calculated to give an innocent pleasure.

I shall only add, that each of my readers will, I hope, remember, that these poems on various subjects, which he reads at one time and under the influence of one set of feelings, were written at different times and prompted by very different feelings; and therefore that the supposed inferiority of one poem to another may sometimes be owing to the temper of mind, in which he happens to peruse it.

My poems have been rightly charged with a profusion of double-epithets, and a general turgidness. I have pruned the double epithets with no sparing hand; and used my best efforts to tame the swell and glitter both of thought and diction.* This lat-

* Without any feeling of anger, I may yet be allowed to express some degree of surprise, that after having run the critical gauntlet for a certain class of faults, which I had, viz. a too ornate, and elaborately poetic diction, and nothing having come before the judgment-seat of the Reviewers during the long interval, I should for at least seventeen years, quarter after quarter, have been placed by them in the foremost rank of the proscribed, and made to abide the brunt of abuse and ridicule for faults directly opposite, viz. bald and

ter fault however had insinuated itself into my Religious Musings with such intricacy of union, that sometimes I have omitted to disentangle the weed from the fear of snapping the flower. A third and heavier accusation has been brought against me, that of obscurity; but not, I think, with equal justice. An author is obscure, when his conceptions are dim and imperfect, and his language incorrect, or inappropriate, or involved. A poem that abounds in allusions, like the Bard of Gray, or one that impersonates high and abstract truths, like Collins's Ode on the poetical character, claims not to be popular—but should be acquitted of obscurity. The deficiency is in the reader. But this is a charge which every poet, whose imagination is warm and rapid, must expect from his contemporaries. Milton did not escape it; and it was adduced with virulence against Gray and Collins. We now hear no more of it: not that their poems are better understood at present, than they were at their first publication; but their fame is established; and a critic would accuse himself of frigidity or inattention, who should profess not to understand them. But a living writer is yet *sub judice;* and if we cannot follow his conceptions or enter into his feelings, it is more consoling to our pride to consider him as lost beneath, than as soaring above us. If any man expect from my poems the same easiness of style which he admires in a drinking-song, for him I have not written. *Intelligibilia, non intellectum adfero.*

prosaic language, and an affected simplicity both of matter and manner—faults which assuredly did not enter into the character of my compositions.

Literary Life, i. 51. Published 1817.

I expect neither profit nor general fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own "exceeding great reward:" it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the Good and the Beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.

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SONNET.

TO THE AUTUMNAL MOON.



ILD splendour of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high;
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lightning o'er the awakened sky.
Ah such is Hope! as changeful and as fair!
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;
Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair:
But soon emerging in her radiant might
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

TIME, REAL AND IMAGINARY.

AN ALLEGORY.



N the wide level of a mountain's head,
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails out-spread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
That far outstripped the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,

And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.



HEN faint and sad o'er sorrow's desert wild
Slow journies onward poor Misfortune's child; [dressed,
When fades each lovely form by fancy
And inly pines the self-consuming breast;
(No scourge of scorpions in thy right arm dread,
No helmed terrors nodding o'er thy head,)
Assume, O Death! the cherub wings of Peace,
And bid the heart-sick wanderer's anguish cease!

Thee, Chatterton! yon unblest stones protect
From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect.
Escaped the sore wounds of affliction's rod,
Meek at the throne of mercy, and of God,
Perchance, thou raisest high the enraptured hymn
Amid the blaze of Seraphim!

Yet oft, ('tis Nature's call)
I weep, that heaven-born Genius so should fall;
And oft, in Fancy's saddest hour, my soul
Averted shudders at the poisoned bowl.
Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view
Thy corse of livid hue;

And now a flash of indignation high
Darts through the tear that glistens in mine eye!

Is this the land of song-ennobled line?
Is this the land, where Genius ne'er in vain
Poured forth his lofty strain?
Ah me! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,
Beneath chill Disappointment's shade,
His weary limbs in lonely anguish laid;
And o'er her darling dead
Pity hopeless hung her head,
While "'mid the pelting of that merciless storm,"
Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famished form!

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame,
From vales where Avon winds the Minstrel * came.
Light-hearted youth! he hastes along,
And meditates the future song,
How dauntless Ælla frayed the Dacyan foes;
See, as floating high in air
Glitter the sunny visions fair,
His eyes dance rapture, and his bosom glows!

Yes! clad in nature's rich array,
And bright in all her tender hues,
Sweet tree of hope! thou loveliest child of spring,
Most fair didst thou disclose thine early bloom,
Loading the west-winds with its soft perfume!
And fancy, elfin form of gorgeous wing,
On every blossom hung her fostering dews,
That, changeful, wantoned to the orient day!
But soon upon thy poor unsheltered head
Did penury her sickly mildew shed.

* Avon, a river near Bristol; the birth-place of Chatterton.

And soon the scathing lightning bade thee stand
In frowning horror o'er the blighted land!

Ah! where are fled the charms of vernal grace,
And joy's wild gleams, light-flashing o'er thy face?
Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye!
Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,
On thy cold forehead starts the anguished dew:
And dreadful was that bosom-rending sigh!
Such were the struggles of the gloomy hour,
When Care, of withered brow,
Prepared the poison's power:
Already to thy lips was raised the bowl,
When near thee stood Affection meek
(Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek)
Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll
On scenes that well might melt thy soul;
Thy native cot she flashed upon thy view,
Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,
Peace smiling sate, and listened to thy lay;
Thy Sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
And mark thy Mother's tear;
See, see her breast's convulsive throe,
Her silent agony of woe!
Ah! dash the poisoned chalice from thy hand!

And thou had'st dashed it, at her soft command,
But that Despair and Indignation rose,
And told again the story of thy woes;
Told the keen insult of the unfeeling heart;
The dread dependence on the low-born mind;
Told every pang, with which thy soul must smart,
Neglect, and grinning scorn, and want combined!

Recoiling quick, thou bad'st the friend of pain
Roll the black tide of Death through every freezing vein!

Ye woods! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,
To Fancy's ear sweet is your murmuring deep!
For here she loves the cypress wreath to weave;
Watching, with wistful eye, the saddening tints of eve.
Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,
In solemn thought the Minstrel wont to rove,
Like star-beam on the slow sequestered tide
Lone-glittering, through the high tree branching wide.
And here, in inspiration's eager hour,
When most the big soul feels the maddening power,
These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,
Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,
With wild unequal steps he passed along,
Oft pouring on the winds a broken song:
Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow
Would pause abrupt—and gaze upon the waves below.
Poor Chatterton! he sorrows for thy fate
Who would have praised and loved thee, ere too late.

Poor Chatterton! farewell! of darkest hues
This chaplet cast I on thy unshaped tomb;
But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,
Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom.
For oh! big gall-drops, shook from folly's wing,
Have blackened the fair promise of my spring;
And the stern fate transpierced with viewless dart
The last pale hope, that shivered at my heart!

Hence, gloomy thoughts! no more my soul shall dwell
On joys that were! No more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,
Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
Sublime of hope I seek the cottaged dell,
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray;
And, dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
The wizard passions weave a holy spell!

O Chatterton! that thou wert yet alive!
Sure thou would'st spread the canvass to the gale,
And love with us the tinkling team to drive
O'er peaceful freedom's undivided dale;
And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
Hanging enraptured on thy stately song,
And greet with smiles the young-eyed Poesy
All deftly masked, as hear antiquity.

Alas, vain phantasies! the fleeting brood
Of Woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood!
Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,
Where Susquehana pours his untamed stream;
And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side
Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,
Will raise a solemn cenotaph to thee,
Sweet Harper of time-shrouded minstrelsy!
And there, soothed sadly by the dirgeful wind,
Muse on the sore ills I had left behind.

Oct. 1794.

SONGS OF THE PIXIES.

THE PIXIES, in the superstition of Devonshire, are a race of beings invisibly small, and harmless or friendly to man. At a small distance from a village in that county, half way up a wood-covered hill, is an excavation called the Pixies' Parlour. The roots of old trees form its ceiling; and on its sides are innumerable cyphers, among which the author discovered his own and those of his brothers, cut by the hand of their childhood. At the foot of the hill flows the river Otter.

To this place the Author, during the summer months of the year 1793, conducted a party of young ladies; one of whom, of stature elegantly small, and of complexion colourless, yet clear, was proclaimed the Faery Queen. On which occasion the following Irregular Ode was written.

I.

WHOM the untaught Shepherds call
Pixies in their madrigal,
Fancy's children, here we dwell:
Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.
Here the wren of softest note
Builds its nest and warbles well;
Here the blackbird strains his throat;
Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.

II.

When fades the moon all shadowy-pale,
And scuds the cloud before the gale,
Ere Morn, with living gems bedight,
Streaks the East with purple light,
We sip the furze-flower's fragrant dews
Clad in robes of rainbow hues:
Richer than the deepened bloom
That glows on summer's scented plume;

Or sport amid the rosy gleam
Soothed by the distant-tinkling team,
While lusty labour scouting sorrow
Bids the dame a glad good-morrow,
Who jogs the accustomed road along,
And paces cheery to her cheering song.

III.

But not our filmy pinion
We scorch amid the blaze of day,
When noontide's fiery-tressed minion
Flashes the fervid ray.
Aye from the sultry heat
We to the cave retreat
O'ercanopied by huge roots intertwined
With wildest texture, blackened o'er with age:
Round them their mantle green the ivies bind,
Beneath whose foliage pale
Fanned by the unfrequent gale
We shield us from the tyrant's mid-day rage.

IV.

Thither, while the murmuring throng
Of wild-bees hum their drowsy song,
By indolence and fancy brought,
A youthful Bard, "unknown to fame,"
Wooes the Queen of solemn thought,
And heaves the gentle misery of a sigh
Gazing with tearful eye,
As round our sandy grot appear
Many a rudely-sculptured name
To pensive Memory dear!
Weaving gay dreams of sunny-tinctured hue
We glance before his view:

O'er his hushed soul our soothing witcheries shed
And twine our faery garlands round his head.

v.

When Evening's dusky car
Crowned with her dewy star
Steals o'er the fading sky in shadowy flight;
On leaves of aspen trees
We tremble to the breeze
Veiled from the grosser ken of mortal sight.
Or, haply, at the visionary hour,
Along our wild sequestered walk,
We listen to the enamoured rustic's talk;
Heave with the heavings of the maiden's breast,
Where young-eyed Loves have built their turtle nest;
Or guide of soul-subduing power
The electric flash, that from the melting eye
Darts the fond question or the soft reply.

vi.

Or through the mystic ringlets of the vale
We flash our faery feet in gamesome prank;
Or, silent-sandalled, pay our defter court,
Circling the Spirit of the western gale,
Where wearied with his flower-caressing sport,
Supine he slumbers on a violet bank;
Then with quaint music hymn the parting gleam
By lonely Otter's sleep-persuading stream;
Or where his wave with loud unquiet song
Dashed o'er the rocky channel froths along;
Or where, his silver waters smoothed to rest,
The tall tree's shadow sleeps upon his breast.

VII.

Hence thou lingerer, Light!
Eve saddens into Night.
Mother of wildly-working dreams! we view
The sombre hours, that round thee stand
With downcast eyes (a duteous band)!
Their dark robes dripping with the heavy dew.
Sorceress of the ebon throne!
Thy power the Pixies own,
When round thy raven brow
Heaven's lucent roses glow,
And clouds in watery colours drest
Float in light drapery o'er thy sable vest:
What time the pale moon sheds a softer day
Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam:
For 'mid the quivering light 'tis ours to play,
Aye dancing to the cadence of the stream.

VIII.

Welcome, Ladies! to the cell
Where the blameless Pixies dwell:
But thou, sweet Nymph! proclaimed our Faery Queen,
With what obeisance meet
Thy presence shall we greet?
For lo! attendant on thy steps are seen
Graceful Ease in artless stole,
And white-robed Purity of soul,
With Honour's softer mien;
Mirth of the loosely-flowing hair,
And meek-eyed Pity eloquently fair,
Whose tearful cheeks are lovely to the view,
As snow-drop wet with dew.

IX.

Unboastful Maid! though now the lily pale
Transparent grace thy beauties meek;
Yet ere again along the impurpling vale,
The purpling vale and elfin-haunted grove,
Young Zephyr his fresh flowers profusely throws
We'll tinge with livelier hues thy cheek;
And, haply, from the nectar-breathing rose
Extract a blush for Love!

THE RAVEN.

A CHRISTMAS TALE, TOLD BY A SCHOOL-BOY TO HIS LITTLE BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

UNDERNEATH a huge oak tree
There was of swine a huge company,
That grunted as they crunched the mast:
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.
Next came a Raven, that liked not such folly:
He belonged, it was said, to the witch Melancholy!
Blacker was he than blackest jet,
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.
He picked up the acorn and buried it straight
By the side of a river both deep and great.
Where then did the Raven go?
He went high and low,
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.
Many Autumns, many Springs
Travelled he with wandering wings:

Many Summers, many Winters—
I can't tell half his adventures.

At length he came back, and with him a She,
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.
They built them a nest in the topmost bough,
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.
But soon came a woodman in leathern guise,
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.
He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,
But with many a hem! and a sturdy stroke,
At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.
His young ones were killed; for they could not depart,
And their mother did die of a broken heart.

The boughs from the trunk the woodman did sever;
And they floated it down on the course of the river.
They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,
And with this tree and others they made a good ship.
The ship, it was launched; but in sight of the land
Such a storm there did rise as no ship could withstand.
It bulged on a rock, and the waves rushed in fast:
Round and round flew the Raven, and cawed to the blast.

He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls—
See! See! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!
Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,
And he thanked him again and again for this treat:
They had taken his all, and Revenge it was sweet!
We must not think so, but forget and forgive;
And what Heaven gives life to, we'll still let it live.

ABSENCE.

A FAREWELL ODE ON QUITTING SCHOOL FOR JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.



HERE graced with many a classic spoil
Cam rolls his reverend stream along,
I haste to urge the learned toil
That sternly chides my love-lorn song:
Ah me! too mindful of the days
Illumed by passion's orient rays,
When peace, and cheerfulness, and health
Enriched me with the best of wealth.

Ah fair delights! that o'er my soul
On memory's wing, like shadows, fly!
Ah flowers! which joy from Eden stole
While innocence stood smiling by!—
But cease, fond heart! this bootless moan:
Those hours on rapid pinions flown
Shall yet return, by absence crowned,
And scatter livelier roses round.

The Sun who ne'er remits his fires
On heedless eyes may pour the day:
The Moon, that oft from Heaven retires,
Endears her renovated ray.
What though she leave the sky unblest
To mourn awhile in murky vest?
When she relumes her lovely light,
We bless the wanderer of the night.

LINES ON AN AUTUMNAL EVENING.

WRITTEN IN EARLY YOUTH.

THOU wild Fancy, check thy wing! No more
Those thin white flakes, those purple clouds explore!
Nor there with happy spirits speed thy flight
Bathed in rich amber-glowing floods of light;
Nor in yon gleam, where slow descends the day,
With western peasants hail the morning ray!
Ah! rather bid the perished pleasures move,
A shadowy train, across the soul of Love!
O'er disappointment's wintry desert fling
Each flower that wreathed the dewy locks of Spring,
When blushing, like a bride, from hope's trim bower
She leapt, awakened by the pattering shower.

Now sheds the sinking sun a deeper gleam,
Aid, lovely Sorceress! aid thy Poet's dream!
With faery wand O bid the maid arise,
Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes;
As erst when from the Muses' calm abode
I came, with learning's meed not unbestowed;
When as she twined a laurel round my brow,
And met my kiss, and half returned my vow,
O'er all my frame shot rapid my thrilled heart,
And every nerve confessed the electric dart.

O dear deceit! I see the maiden rise,
Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes!

When first the lark high soaring swells his throat,
Mocks the tired eye, and scatters the loud note,
I trace her footsteps on the accustomed lawn,
I mark her glancing 'mid the gleam of dawn.
When the bent flower beneath the night-dew weeps
And on the lake the silver lustre sleeps,
Amid the paly radiance soft and sad,
She meets my lonely path in moon-beams clad.
With her along the streamlet's brink I rove;
With her I list the warblings of the grove;
And seems in each low wind her voice to float,
Lone whispering Pity in each soothing note!

Spirits of Love! ye heard her name! Obey
The powerful spell, and to my haunt repair.
Whether on clustering pinions ye are there,
Where rich snows blossom on the myrtle trees,
Or with fond languishment around my fair
Sigh in the loose luxuriance of her hair;
O heed the spell, and hither wing your way,
Like far-off music, voyaging the breeze!

Spirits! to you the infant maid was given
Formed by the wonderous alchemy of Heaven!
No fairer maid does love's wide empire know,
No fairer maid e'er heaved the bosom's snow.
A thousand loves around her forehead fly;
A thousand loves sit melting in her eye;
Love lights her smile—in joy's bright nectar dips
The flamy rose, and plants it on her lips.
Tender, serene, and all devoid of guile,
Soft is her soul, and sleeping infant's smile;
She speaks! and hark that passion-warbled song—
Still, fancy! still those mazy notes prolong,

As sweet as when that voice with rapturous falls
Shall wake the softened echoes of Heaven's halls!

O (have I sighed) were mine the wizard's rod,
Or mine the power of Proteus, changeful god!
A flower-entangled arbour I would seem
To shield my love from noontide's sultry beam:
Or bloom a myrtle, from whose odorous boughs
My love might weave gay garlands for her brows.
When twilight stole across the fading vale,
To fan my love I'd be the evening gale;
Mourn in the soft folds of her swelling vest,
And flutter my faint pinions on her breast!
On Seraph wing I'd float a dream by night,
To soothe my love with shadows of delight:—
Or soar aloft to be the spangled skies,
And gaze upon her with a thousand eyes!

As when the savage, who his drowsy frame
Had basked beneath the sun's unclouded flame,
Awakes amid the troubles of the air,
The skiey deluge, and white lightning's glare—
Aghast he scours before the tempest's sweep,
And sad recalls the sunny hour of sleep:—
So tossed by storms along life's wildering way,
Mine eye reverted views that cloudless day,
When by my native brook I wont to rove,
While hope with kisses nursed the infant love.

Dear native brook! like peace, so placidly
Smoothing through fertile fields thy current meek!
Dear native brook! where first young Poesy
Stared wildly eager in her noon-tide dream!
Where blameless pleasures dimple Quiet's cheek,

As water-lilies ripple thy slow stream!
Dear native haunts! where Virtue still is gay,
Where Friendship's fixed star sheds a mellowed ray,
Where Love a crown of thornless roses wears,
Where softened Sorrow smiles within her tears;
And Memory, with a vestal's chaste employ,
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of joy!
No more your sky-larks melting from the sight
Shall thrill the attuned heart-string with delight—
No more shall deck your pensive pleasures sweet
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat.
Yet dear to fancy's eye your varied scene
Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between!
Yet sweet to fancy's ear the warbled song,
That soars on morning's wing your vales among.

Scenes of my hope! the aching eye ye leave
Like yon bright hues that paint the clouds of eve!
Tearful and saddening with the saddened blaze
Mine eye the gleam pursues with wistful gaze:
Sees shades on shades with deeper tint impend,
Till chill and damp the moonless night descend.

THE ROSE.

AS late each flower that sweetest blows
I plucked, the garden's pride!
Within the petals of a rose
A sleeping Love I spied.

Around his brows a beamy wreath
Of many a lucent hue;
All purple glowed his cheek, beneath,
Imbrued with dew.

I softly seized the unguarded power,
Nor scared his balmy rest:
And placed him, caged within the flower,
On spotless Sara's breast.

But when unweeting of the guile
Awoke the prisoner sweet,
He struggled to escape awhile,
And stamped his faery feet.

Ah! soon the soul-entrancing sight
Subdued the impatient boy!
He gazed! he thrilled with deep delight!
Then clapped his wings for joy.

"And O!" he cried—"of magic kind
What charms this throne endear!
Some other Love let Venus find—
I'll fix my empire here."

THE KISS.

ONE kiss, dear maid, I said and sighed—
Your scorn the little boon denied.
Ah why refuse the blameless bliss?
Can danger lurk within a kiss?

Yon viewless Wanderer of the vale,
The Spirit of the western gale,
At morning's break, at evening's close
Inhales the sweetness of the rose,

And hovers o'er the uninjured bloom
Sighing back the soft perfume.
Vigour to the Zephyr's wing
Her nectar-breathing kisses fling;
And he the glitter of the dew
Scatters on the rose's hue.
Bashful lo! she bends her head,
And darts a blush of deeper red!

Too well those lovely lips disclose
The triumphs of the opening rose;
O fair! O graceful! bid them prove
As passive to the breath of love.
In tender accents, faint and low,
Well-pleased I hear the whispered "No!"
The whispered "No!"—how little meant!
Sweet falsehood that endears consent!
For on those lovely lips the while
Dawns the soft relenting smile,
And tempts with feigned dissuasion coy
The gentle violence of joy.

KISSES.

CUPID, if storying legends tell aright,
Once framed a rich elixir of delight.
A chalice o'er love-kindled flames he fixed,
And in it nectar and ambrosia mixed:
With these the magic dews, which evening brings,
Brushed from the Idalian star by faery wings:
Each tender pledge of sacred faith he joined,
Each gentler pleasure of the unspotted mind—

Day-dreams, whose tints with sportive brightness glow,
And Hope, the blameless parasite of woe.
The eyeless chemist heard the process rise,
The steamy chalice bubbled up in sighs;
Sweet sounds transpired, as when the enamoured dove
Pours the soft murmuring of responsive love.
The finished work might envy vainly blame,
And "Kisses" was the precious compound's name;
With half, the God his Cyprian Mother blest,
And breathed on Sara's lovelier lips the rest.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

SISTER of love-lorn poets, Philomel!
How many bards in city garret pent,
While at their window they with downward eye
Mark the faint lamp-beam on the kennelled mud,
And listen to the drowsy cry of watchmen,
Those hoarse, unfeathered nightingales of time!
How many wretched bards address thy name,
And her's, the full-orbed queen, that shines above.
But I *do* hear thee, and the high bough mark,
Within whose mild moon-mellowed foliage hid,
Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains.
O, I have listened, till my working soul,
Waked by those strains to thousand phantasies,
Absorbed, hath ceased to listen! Therefore oft
I hymn thy name; and with a proud delight
Oft will I tell thee, minstrel of the moon,
"Most musical, most melancholy" bird!
That all thy soft diversities of tone,

Though sweeter far than the delicious airs
That vibrate from a white-armed lady's harp,
What time the languishment of lonely love
Melts in her eye, and heaves her breast of snow,
Are not so sweet, as is the voice of her,
My Sara—best beloved of human kind!
When breathing the pure soul of tenderness,
She thrills me with the husband's promised name!

1794.

TO A YOUNG ASS,

ITS MOTHER BEING TETHERED NEAR IT.

OOR little foal of an oppressed race!
I love the languid patience of thy face:
And oft with gentle hand I give thee bread,
And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head.
But what thy dulled spirits hath dismayed,
That never thou dost sport along the glade?
And (most unlike the nature of things young)
That earthward still thy moveless head is hung?
Do thy prophetic fears anticipate,
Meek child of misery! thy future fate?
The starving meal, and all the thousand aches
"Which patient merit of the unworthy takes?"
Or is thy sad heart thrilled with filial pain
To see thy wretched mother's shortened chain?
And, truly very piteous is her lot—
Chained to a log within a narrow spot,
Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the tempting green!

Poor Ass! thy master should have learnt to show
Pity—best taught by fellowship of woe!
For much I fear me that he lives like thee,
Half famished in a land of luxury!
How askingly its footsteps hither bend,
It seems to say, "And have I then one friend?"
Innocent foal! thou poor despised forlorn!
I hail thee brother—spite of the fool's scorn!
And fain would take thee with me, in the dell
Of peace and mild equality to dwell,
Where toil shall call the charmer health his bride,
And laughter tickle plenty's ribless side!
How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play
And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!
Yea! and more musically sweet to me
Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,
Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest
The aching of pale fashion's vacant breast!

Dec. 1794.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

WITH AN UNFINISHED POEM.

THUS far my scanty brain hath built the rhyme
Elaborate and swelling;—yet the heart
Not owns it. From thy spirit-breathing powers
I ask not now, my friend! the aiding verse
Tedious to thee, and from thy anxious thought
Of dissonant mood. In fancy (well I know)
From business wandering far and local cares,

Thou creepest round a dear-loved sister's bed
With noiseless step, and watchest the faint look,
Soothing each pang with fond solicitude,
And tenderest tones medicinal of love.
I, too, a sister had, an only sister—
She loved me dearly, and I doted on her;
To her I poured forth all my puny sorrows,
(As a sick patient in a nurse's arms,)
And of the heart those hidden maladies
That shrink ashamed from even friendship's eye.
Oh! I have waked at midnight, and have wept
Because she was not!—Cheerily, dear Charles!
Thou thy best friend shalt cherish many a year;
Such warm presages feel I of high hope!
For not uninterested the dear maid
I've viewed—her soul affectionate yet wise,
Her polished wit as mild as lambent glories
That play around a sainted infant's head.
He knows, (the Spirit that in secret sees,
Of whose omniscient and all-spreading love
Aught to implore were impotence of mind!)*
That my mute thoughts are sad before His throne,—
Prepared, when He His healing ray vouchsafes,
Thanksgiving to pour forth with lifted heart,
And praise Him gracious with a brother's joy!

Dec. 1794.

* "I utterly recant the sentiment contained in the lines,—

Of whose omniscient and all-spreading love
Aught to *implore* were impotence of mind,—

it being written in Scripture, *Ask*, and it shall be given you! and my human reason being, moreover, convinced of the propriety of offering *petitions* as well as thanksgivings to Deity." S. T. C. 1797.

DOMESTIC PEACE.



ELL me, on what holy ground
May Domestic Peace be found—
Halcyon daughter of the skies!
Far on fearful wing she flies,
From the pomp of sceptred state,
From the rebel's noisy hate.
In a cottaged vale she dwells
Listening to the Sabbath bells!
Still around her steps are seen
Spotless honour's meeker mien,
Love, the sire of pleasing fears,
Sorrow smiling through her tears,
And conscious of the past employ
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

THE SIGH.



HEN Youth his faery reign began
Ere sorrow had proclaimed me man;
While peace the present hour beguiled,
And all the lovely prospect smiled;
Then Mary! 'mid my lightsome glee
I heaved the painless Sigh for thee.

And when, along the waves of woe,
My harassed heart was doomed to know

The frantic burst of outrage keen,
And the slow pang that gnaws unseen;
Then shipwrecked on life's stormy sea
I heaved an anguished Sigh for thee!

But soon reflection's power imprest
A stiller sadness on my breast;
And sickly hope with waning eye
Was well content to droop and die:
I yielded to the stern decree,
Yet heaved a languid Sigh for thee!

And though in distant climes to roam,
A wanderer from my native home,
I fain would soothe the sense of care,
And lull to sleep the joys that were,
Thy image may not banished be—
Still, Mary! still I sigh for thee.

June, 1794.

EPITAPH ON AN INFANT.



RE sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed
And bade it blossom there.

LINES

WRITTEN AT THE KING'S ARMS, ROSS, FORMERLY THE HOUSE OF THE "MAN OF ROSS."



ICHER than the miser o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than Kings, or king-polluted lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O Traveller, hear!
Departed merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he viewed his modest wealth;
He hears the widow's heaven-breathed prayer of praise,
He marks the sheltered orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivelled captive lay,
Pours the bright blaze of freedom's noon-tide ray.
Beneath this roof if thy cheered moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall memory wake thy soul,
And virtue mingle in the ennobled bowl.
But if, like me, through life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if, thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tossed in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness, thou hast never felt!

LINES

TO A BEAUTIFUL SPRING IN A VILLAGE.



NCE more, sweet Stream! with slow foot wandering near,
I bless thy milky waters cold and clear.
Escaped the flashing of the noontide hours,
With one fresh garland of Pierian flowers,
(Ere from thy zephyr-haunted brink I turn,)
My languid hand shall wreathe thy mossy urn.
For not through pathless grove with murmur rude
Thou soothest the sad wood-nymph, Solitude;
Nor thine unseen in cavern depths to well,
The hermit-fountain of some dripping cell!
Pride of the vale! thy useful streams supply
The scattered cots and peaceful hamlet nigh.
The elfin tribe around thy friendly banks
With infant uproar and soul-soothing pranks,
Released from school, their little hearts at rest,
Launch paper navies on thy waveless breast.
The rustic here at eve with pensive look
Whistling lorn ditties leans upon his crook,
Or starting pauses with hope-mingled dread
To list the much-loved maid's accustomed tread:
She, vainly mindful of her dame's command,
Loiters, the long-filled pitcher in her hand.

Unboastful Stream! thy fount with pebbled falls
The faded form of past delight recalls,

What time the morning sun of hope arose,
And all was joy; save when another's woes
A transient gloom upon my soul imprest,
Like passing clouds impictured on thy breast.
Life's current then ran sparkling to the noon,
Or silvery stole beneath the pensive moon:
Ah! now it works rude brakes and thorns among,
Or o'er the rough rock bursts and foams along!

LINES ON A FRIEND

WHO DIED OF A FRENZY FEVER INDUCED BY CALUMNIOUS REPORTS.

DMUND! thy grave with aching eye I scan,
And inly groan for heaven's poor outcast—Man!
'Tis tempest all or gloom: in early youth
If gifted with the Ithuriel lance of truth
We force to start amid her feigned caress
Vice, siren-hag! in native ugliness;
A Brother's fate will haply rouse the tear,
And on we go in heaviness and fear!
But if our fond hearts call to pleasure's bower
Some pigmy folly in a careless hour,
The faithless guest shall stamp the enchanted ground,
And mingled forms of misery rise around:
Heart-fretting fear, with pallid look aghast,
That courts the future woe to hide the past;
Remorse, the poisoned arrow in his side,
And loud lewd mirth, to anguish close allied:

Till frenzy, fierce-eyed child of moping pain,
Darts her hot lightning-flash athwart the brain.

Rest, injured shade! Shall slander squatting near
Spit her cold venom in a dead man's ear?
'Twas thine to feel the sympathetic glow
In merit's joy, and poverty's meek woe;
Thine all, that cheer the moment as it flies,
The zoneless cares, and smiling courtesies.
Nursed in thy heart the firmer virtues grew,
And in thy heart they withered! Such chill dew
Wan indolence on each young blossom shed;
And vanity her filmy net-work spread,
With eye that rolled around in asking gaze,
And tongue that trafficked in the trade of praise.
Thy follies such! the hard world marked them well!
Were they more wise, the proud who never fell?
Rest, injured Shade! the poor man's grateful prayer
On heaven-ward wing thy wounded soul shall bear.
As oft at twilight gloom thy grave I pass,
And sit me down upon its recent grass,
With introverted eye I contemplate
Similitude of soul, perhaps of—fate;
To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assigned
Energic reason and a shaping mind,
The daring ken of truth, the patriot's part,
And pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart.
Sloth-jaundiced all! and from my graspless hand
Drop friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand.
I weep, yet stoop not! the faint anguish flows,
A dreamy pang in morning's feverous doze.

Is this piled earth our being's passless mound?
Tell me, cold grave! is death with poppies crowned?

Tired sentinel! 'mid fitful starts I nod,
And fain would sleep, though pillowed on a clod!

Nov. 1794.

TO A YOUNG LADY,

WITH A POEM ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

MUCH on my early youth I love to dwell,
Ere yet I bade that friendly dome farewell,
Where first, beneath the echoing cloisters pale,
I heard of guilt and wondered at the tale!
Yet though the hours flew by on careless wing,
Full heavily of sorrow would I sing.
Aye as the star of evening flung its beam
In broken radiance on the wavy stream,
My soul amid the pensive twilight gloom
Mourned with the breeze, O Lee Boo!* o'er thy tomb.
Where'er I wandered, pity still was near,
Breathed from the heart and glistened in the tear:
No knell that tolled, but filled my anxious eye,
And suffering Nature wept that one should die!†

Thus to sad sympathies I soothed my breast,
Calm, as the rainbow in the weeping west:

* Lee Boo, the son of Abba Thule, Prince of the Pelew Islands, came over to England with Captain Wilson, died of the small-pox, and is buried in Greenwich church-yard. See Keate's Account.

† Southey's Retrospect.

When slumbering freedom roused by high disdain
With giant fury burst her triple chain!
Fierce on her front the blasting dog-star glowed;
Her banners, like a midnight meteor, flowed;
Amid the yelling of the storm-rent skies
She came, and scattered battles from her eyes!
Then exultation waked the patriot fire
And swept with wild hand the Tyrtæan lyre:
Red from the tyrant's wound I shook the lance,
And strode in joy the reeking plains of France!

Fallen is the oppressor, friendless, ghastly, low,
And my heart aches, though mercy struck the blow.
With wearied thought once more I seek the shade,
Where peaceful virtue weaves the myrtle braid.
And O! if eyes whose holy glances roll,
Swift messengers, and eloquent of soul;
If smiles more winning, and a gentler mien
Than the love-wildered maniac's brain hath seen
Shaping celestial forms in vacant air,
If these demand the impassioned Poet's care—
If mirth and softened sense and wit refined,
The blameless features of a lovely mind;
Then haply shall my trembling hand assign
No fading wreath to beauty's saintly shrine.
Nor, Sara! thou these early flowers refuse—
Ne'er lurked the snake beneath their simple hues;
No purple bloom the Child of Nature brings
From flattery's night-shade: as he feels he sings.

Sept. 1794.

SONNET I.

"Content, as random Fancies might inspire,
If his weak harp at times or lonely lyre
He struck with desultory hand, and drew
Some softened tones to Nature not untrue."
BOWLES.


Y heart has thanked thee, Bowles! for those soft strains
Whose sadness soothes me, like the murmuring
Of wild-bees in the sunny showers of spring!
For hence not callous to the mourner's pains
Through Youth's gay prime and thornless paths I went:
And when the darker day of life began,
And I did roam a thought-bewildered man,
Their mild and manliest melancholy lent
A mingled charm, which oft the pang consigned
To slumber, though the big tear it renewed;
Bidding such strange mysterious pleasure brood
Over the wavy and tumultuous mind,
As made the soul enamoured of her woe:
No common praise, dear Bard, to thee I owe!

SONNET II.


S late I lay in slumber's shadowy vale,
With wetted cheek and in a mourner's guise,
I saw the sainted form of Freedom rise:
She spake! not sadder moans the autumnal gale—

" Great Son of Genius! sweet to me thy name,
Ere in an evil hour with altered voice
Thou bad'st oppression's hireling crew rejoice
Blasting with wizard spell my laurelled fame.
Yet never, Burke! thou drank'st corruption's bowl!
Thee stormy pity and the cherished lure
Of pomp, and proud precipitance of soul
Wildered with meteor fires. Ah Spirit pure!
That error's mist had left thy purged eye:
So might I clasp thee with a mother's joy!"

SONNET III.



HOUGH roused by that dark Vizir Riot rude
Have driven our Priestly o'er the ocean swell;
Though superstition and her wolfish brood
Bay his mild radiance, impotent and fell;
Calm in his halls of brightness he shall dwell!
For lo! Religion at his strong behest
Starts with mild anger from the papal spell,
And flings to earth her tinsel-glittering vest,
Her mitred state and cumbrous pomp unholy;
And justice wakes to bid the oppressor wail
Insulting aye the wrongs of patient folly:
And from her dark retreat by wisdom won
Meek Nature slowly lifts her matron veil
And smile with fondness on her gazing son!

SONNET IV.



HEN British Freedom for a happier land
Spread her broad wings that fluttered with affright,
Erskine! thy voice she heard, and paused her flight
Sublime of hope! For dreadless thou didst stand
(Thy censer glowing with the hallowed flame)
A hireless priest before the insulted shrine,
And at her altar pour the stream divine
Of unmatched eloquence. Therefore thy name
Her sons shall venerate, and cheer thy breast
With blessings heavenward breathed. And when the doom
Of nature bids thee die, beyond the tomb
Thy light shall shine: as sunk beneath the West
Though the great summer sun eludes our gaze,
Still burns wide Heaven with his distended blaze.

SONNET V.



T was some Spirit, Sheridan! that breathed
O'er thy young mind such wildly various power!
My soul hath marked thee in her shaping hour,
Thy temples with Hymettian flowerets wreathed:

And sweet thy voice, as when o'er Laura's bier
Sad music trembled through Vauclusa's glade;
Sweet, as at dawn the love-lorn serenade
That wafts soft dreams to slumber's listening ear.
Now patriot rage and indignation high
Swell the full tones! And now thine eye-beams dance
Meanings of scorn and wit's quaint revelry!
Writhes inly from the bosom-probing glance
The apostate by the brainless rout adored,
As erst that elder fiend beneath great Michael's sword.

SONNET VI.



WHAT a loud and fearful shriek was there,
As though a thousand souls one death-groan poured!
Ah me! they viewed beneath a hireling's sword
Fallen Kosciusko! Through the burdened air
(As pauses the tired Cossac's barbarous yell
Of triumph) on the chill and midnight gale
Rises with frantic burst or sadder swell
The dirge of murdered Hope! while Freedom pale
Bends in such anguish o'er her destined bier,
As if from eldest time some spirit meek
Had gathered in a mystic urn each tear
That ever furrowed a sad Patriot's cheek,
And she had drained the sorrows of the bowl
Even till she reeled, intoxicate of soul!

SONNET VII.

AS when far off the warbled strains are heard,
That soar on Morning's wing the vales among,
Within his cage the imprisoned matin bird
Swells the full chorus with a generous song:
He bathes no pinion in the dewy light,
No father's joy, no lover's bliss he shares,
Yet still the rising radiance cheers his sight;
His fellows' freedom soothes the captive's cares!
Thou, Fayette! who didst wake with startling voice
Life's better sun from that long wintry night,
Thus in thy country's triumphs shalt rejoice,
And mock with raptures high the dungeon's might:
For lo! the morning struggles into day,
And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray!

SONNET VIII.

THOU gentle look, that didst my soul beguile,
Why hast thou left me? Still in some fond dream
Revisit my sad heart, auspicious smile!
As falls on closing flowers the lunar beam:
What time, in sickly mood, at parting day
I lay me down and think of happier years;

Of joys, that glimmered in hope's twilight ray,
Then left me darkling in a vale of tears.
O pleasant days of hope—for ever gone!—
Could I recall you!—But that thought is vain.
Availeth not persuasion's sweetest tone
To lure the fleet-winged travellers back again:
Yet fair, though faint, their images shall gleam
Like the bright rainbow on an evening stream.

SONNET IX.



ALE Roamer through the night! thou poor Forlorn!
Remorse that man on his death-bed possess,
Who in the credulous hour of tenderness
Betrayed, then cast thee forth to want and scorn!
The world is pitiless: the chaste one's pride
Mimic of virtue scowls on thy distress:
Thy loves and they, that envied thee, deride:
And vice alone will shelter wretchedness!
O! I am sad to think that there should be
Cold-bosomed lewd ones, who endure to place
Foul offerings on the shrine of misery,
And force from famine the caress of Love;
May He shed healing on thy sore disgrace,
He, the great Comforter that rules above

SONNET X.



WEET Mercy! how my very heart has bled
To see thee, poor Old Man! and thy gray hairs
Hoar with the snowy blast: while no one cares
To clothe thy shrivelled limbs and palsied head.
My Father! throw away this tattered vest
That mocks thy shivering! take my garment—use
A young man's arm! I'll melt these frozen dews
That hang from thy white beard and numb thy breast.
My Sara too shall tend thee, like a child:
And thou shalt talk in our fireside's recess,
Of purple pride, that scowls on wretchedness.
He did not scowl, the Galilean mild,
Who met the Lazar turned from rich man's doors,
And called him friend, and wept upon his sores!

SONNET XI.



HOU bleedest, my poor heart! and thy distress
Reasoning I ponder with a scornful smile,
And probe thy sore wound sternly, though the while
Swoln be mine eye and dim with heaviness.
Why didst thou listen to hope's whisper bland?

Or, listening, why forget the healing tale,
When jealousy with feverous fancies pale
Jarred thy fine fibres with a maniac's hand?
Faint was that hope, and rayless!—Yet 'twas fair,
And soothed with many a dream the hour of rest:
Thou shouldst have loved it most, when most opprest,
And nursed it with an agony of care,
Even as a mother her sweet infant heir
That wan and sickly droops upon her breast!

SONNET XII.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE "ROBBERS."

SCHILLER! that hour I would have wished to die,
If through the shuddering midnight I had sent
From the dark dungeon of the tower time-rent
That fearful voice, a famished father's cry—
That in no after moment aught less vast
Might stamp me mortal! A triumphant shout
Black horror screamed, and all her goblin rout
From the more withering scene diminished past!
Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
Wandering at eve with finely frenzied eye
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!
Awhile with mute awe gazing I would brood:
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy!

LINES

COMPOSED WHILE CLIMBING THE LEFT ASCENT OF BROCKLEY COOMB, SOMERSETSHIRE, MAY, 1795.



ITH many a pause and oft reverted eye
I climb the Coomb's ascent: sweet songsters near
Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:
Far off the unvarying cuckoo soothes my ear.
Up scour the startling stragglers of the flock
That on green plots o'er precipices browse:
From the forced fissures of the naked rock
The yew tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs
('Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms white)
Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,
I rest:—and now have gained the topmost site.
Ah! what a luxury of landscape meets
My gaze! Proud towers, and cots more dear to me,
Elm-shadowed fields, and prospect-bounding sea!
Deep sighs my lonely heart: I drop the tear:
Enchanting spot! O were my Sara here!

LINES

IN THE MANNER OF SPENSER.



PEACE, that on a lilied bank dost love
To rest thine head beneath an olive tree,
I would, that from the pinions of thy dove
One quill withouten pain yplucked might be!
For O! I wish my Sara's frowns to flee,
And fain to her some soothing song would write,
Lest she resent my rude discourtesy,
Who vowed to meet her ere the morning light,
But broke my plighted word—ah! false and recreant wight!

Last night as I my weary head did pillow
With thoughts of my dissevered Fair engrost,
Chill fancy drooped wreathing herself with willow,
As though my breast entombed a pining ghost.
"From some blest couch, young rapture's bridal boast,
Rejected slumber! hither wing thy way;
But leave me with the matin hour, at most!
As night-closed floweret to the orient ray,
My sad heart will expand, when I the Maid survey."

But Love, who heard the silence of my thought,
Contrived a too successful wile, I ween:
And whispered to himself, with malice fraught—
"Too long our slave the Damsel's smiles hath seen:
To-morrow shall he ken her altered mien!"

He spake, and ambushed lay, till on my bed
The morning shot her dewy glances keen,
When as I 'gan to lift my drowsy head—
"Now, Bard! I'll work thee woe!" the laughing
Elfin said.

Sleep, softly-breathing god! his downy wing
Was fluttering now, as quickly to depart;
When twanged an arrow from Love's mystic string,
With pathless wound it pierced him to the heart.
Was there some magic in the Elfin's dart?
Or did he strike my couch with wizard lance?
For straight so fair a Form did upwards start
(No fairer decked the bowers of old romance)
That sleep enamoured grew, nor moved from his sweet
trance!

My Sara came, with gentlest look divine
Bright shone her eye, yet tender was its beam:
I felt the pressure of her lip to mine!
Whispering we went, and love was all our theme—
Love pure and spotless, as at first, I deem,
He sprang from Heaven! Such joys with sleep did
That I the living image of my dream ['bide,
Fondly forgot. Too late I woke, and sighed—
"O! how shall I behold my Love at even-tide!"

July, 1795.

IMITATED FROM OSSIAN.

THE stream with languid murmur creeps,
In Lumin's flowery vale:
Beneath the dew the lily weeps
Slow-waving to the gale.

"Cease, restless gale!" it seems to say,
"Nor wake me with thy sighing!
The honours of my vernal day
On rapid wing are flying.

"To-morrow shall the traveller come
Who late beheld me blooming:
His searching eye shall vainly roam
The dreary vale of Lumin."

With eager gaze and wetted cheek
My wonted haunts along,
Thus, faithful maiden! thou shalt seek
The youth of simplest song.

But I along the breeze shall roll
The voice of feeble power;
And dwell, the moon-beam of thy soul,
In slumber's nightly hour.

THE COMPLAINT OF NINATHOMA.

HOW long will ye round me be swelling,
O ye blue-tumbling waves of the sea?
Not always in caves was my dwelling,
Nor beneath the cold blast of the tree.
Through the high-sounding halls of Cathlóma
In the steps of my beauty I strayed;
The warriors beheld Ninathóma,
And they blessed the white-bosomed maid!

A Ghost! by my cavern it darted!
In moon-beams the Spirit was drest—
For lovely appear the departed
When they visit the dreams of my rest!
But disturbed by the tempest's commotion
Fleet the shadowy forms of delight—
Ah cease, thou shrill blast of the ocean!
To howl through my cavern by night.

MUTUAL PASSION.

ALTERED AND MODERNIZED FROM AN OLD POET.



LOVE, and he loves me again,
Yet dare I not tell who:
For if the nymphs should know my swain,
I fear they'd love him too.
Yet while my joy's unknown,
Its rosy buds are but half-blown:
What no one with me shares, seems scarce my own.

I'll tell, that if they be not glad,
They yet may envy me:
But then if I grow jealous mad,
And of them pitied be,
'Twould vex me worse than scorn!
And yet it cannot be forborn,
Unless my heart would like my thoughts be torn.

He is, if they can find him, fair
And fresh, and fragrant too;
As after rain the summer air,
And looks as lilies do,

That are this morning blown!
Yet, yet I doubt, he is not known,
Yet, yet I fear to have him fully shown.

But he hath eyes so large, and bright,
Which none can see, and doubt
That Love might thence his torches light
Though Hate had put them out!
But then to raise my fears,
His voice—what maid soever hears
Will be my rival, though she have but ears.

I'll tell no more! yet I love him,
And he loves me; yet so,
That never one low wish did dim
Our love's pure light, I know—
In each so free from blame,
That both of us would gain new fame,
If love's strong fears would let me tell his name!

IMITATED FROM THE WELSH.

IF, while my passion I impart,
You deem my words untrue,
O place your hand upon my heart—
Feel how it throbs for you!

Ah no! reject the thoughtless claim
In pity to your Lover!
That thrilling touch would aid the flame,
It wishes to discover.

THE HOUR WHEN WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.

COMPOSED DURING ILLNESS AND IN ABSENCE.



IM Hour! that sleep'st on pillowing clouds afar,
O rise, and yoke the turtles to thy car!
Bend o'er the traces, blame each lingering dove,
And give me to the bosom of my Love!
My gentle Love! caressing and carest,
With heaving heart shall cradle me to rest;
Shed the warm tear-drop from her smiling eyes,
Lull with fond woe, and medicine me with sighs;
While finely-flushing float her kisses meek,
Like melted rubies, o'er my pallid cheek.
Chilled by the night the drooping rose of May
Mourns the long absence of the lovely day:
Young day, returning at her promised hour,
Weeps o'er the sorrows of her favourite flower,—
Weeps the soft dew, the balmy gale she sighs,
And darts a trembling lustre from her eyes.
New life and joy the expanding floweret feels:
His pitying mistress mourns, and mourning heals!

1796.

TO AN INFANT.



H! cease thy tears and sobs, my little Life!
I did but snatch away the unclasped knife:
Some safer toy will soon arrest thine eye,
And to quick laughter change this peevish
cry!
Poor stumbler on the rocky coast of woe,
Tutored by pain each source of pain to know!
Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire
Awake thy eager grasp and young desire;
Yet art thou wise, for 'mid thy brief alarms
Thou closely clingest to thy mother's arms,
Nestling thy little face in that fond breast
Whose anxious heavings lull thee to thy rest!
Man's breathing miniature! thou mak'st me sigh—
A babe art thou—and such a thing am I!
To anger rapid and as soon appeased,
For trifles mourning and by trifles pleased,
Break friendship's mirror with a tetchy blow,
Yet snatch what coals of fire on pleasure's altar glow:

O thou that rearest with celestial aim
The future Seraph in my mortal frame,
Thrice holy Faith! whatever thorns I meet
As on I totter with unpractised feet,
Still let me stretch my arms and cling to thee,
Meek nurse of souls through their long infancy!

ON THE CHRISTENING OF A FRIEND'S CHILD.

I.



HIS day among the faithful placed,
And fed with fontal manna,
O with maternal title graced—
Dear Anna's dearest Anna!—

II.

While others wish thee wise and fair,
A maid of spotless fame,
I'll breathe this more compendious prayer—
Mayst thou deserve thy name!

III.

Thy mother's name—a potent spell,
That bids the virtues hie
From mystic grove and living cell
Confessed to fancy's eye;—

IV.

Meek quietness without offence;
Content in homespun kirtle;
True love; and true love's innocence,
White blossom of the myrtle!

V.

Associates of thy name, sweet child!
These virtues mayst thou win;
With face as eloquently mild,
To say, they lodge within.

VI.

So, when her tale of days all flown,
Thy mother shall be missed here;
When Heaven at length shall claim its own,
And angels snatch their sister;

VII.

Some hoary-headed friend, perchance,
May gaze with stifled breath;
And oft, in momentary trance,
Forget the waste of death.

VIII.

Even thus a lovely rose I viewed,
In summer-swelling pride;
Nor marked the bud that, green and rude,
Peeped at the rose's side.

IX.

It chanced, I passed again that way,
In autumn's latest hour,
And wondering saw the selfsame spray
Rich with the selfsame flower.

X.

Ah, fond deceit! the rude green bud
Alike in shape, place, name,
Had bloomed, where bloomed its parent stud,
Another and the same!

1796.

LINES TO JOSEPH COTTLE.



Y honoured friend! whose verse concise yet clear
Tunes to smooth melody unconquered sense,
May your fame fadeless live, as "never sere"
The ivy wreathes yon oak, whose broad defence
Embowers me from noon's sultry influence!
For, like that nameless rivulet stealing by,
Your modest verse to musing quiet dear
Is rich with tints heaven-borrowed; the charmed eye
Shall gaze undazzled there, and love the softened sky.

Circling the base of the poetic mount
A stream there is, which rolls in lazy flow
Its coal-black waters from oblivion's fount;
The vapour poisoned birds, that fly too low,
Fall with dead swoop, and to the bottom go.
Escaped that heavy stream on pinion fleet
Beneath the mountain's lofty-frowning brow,
Ere aught of perilous ascent you meet,
A mead of mildest charm delays the unlabouring feet.

Not there the cloud-climbed rock, sublime and vast,
That like some giant king o'erglooms the hill,
Nor there the pine-grove to the midnight blast
Makes solemn music! But the unceasing rill
To the soft wren or lark's descending trill
Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmin bowers.

In this same pleasant meadow, at your will,
I ween you wandered—there collecting flowers
Of sober tint, and herbs of medicinable powers!

There for the monarch-murdered soldier's tomb,
You wove the unfinished wreath* of saddest hues,
And to that holier chaplet† added bloom,
Besprinkling it with Jordan's cleansing dews!
But lo! your Henderson‡ awakes the muse—
His spirit beckoned from the mountain's height!
You left the plain and soared 'mid richer views!
So Nature mourned, when sank the first day's light,
With stars, unseen before, spangling her robe of night!

Still soar, my friend, those richer views among,
Strong, rapid, fervent, flashing fancy's beam!
Virtue and truth shall love your gentler song;
But poesy demands the impassioned theme:
Waked by heaven's silent dews at eve's mild gleam
What balmy sweets Pomona breathes around!
But if the vexed air rush a stormy stream,
Or Autumn's shrill gust moan in plaintive sound,
With fruits and flowers she loads the tempest honoured ground.

* War, a fragment. † John the Baptist, a poem.
‡ Monody on John Henderson.

LINES

WRITTEN AT SHURTON BARS, NEAR BRIDGEWATER, SEPTEMBER, 1795, IN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM BRISTOL.

"Good verse most good, and bad verse then seems better
Received from absent friend by way of Letter.
For what so sweet can laboured lays impart
As one rude rhyme warm from a friendly heart?"—ANON.

NOR travels my meandering eye
The starry wilderness on high;
Nor now with curious sight
I mark the glow-worm, as I pass,
Move with "green radiance" through the grass,
An emerald of light.

O ever present to my view!
My wafted spirit is with you,
And soothes your boding fears:
I see you all oppressed with gloom
Sit lonely in that cheerless room—
Ah me! You are in tears!

Beloved Woman! did you fly
Chilled friendship's dark disliking eye,
Or mirth's untimely din?
With cruel weight these trifles press
A temper sore with tenderness,
When aches the void within.

But why with sable wand unblest
Should fancy rouse within my breast
 Dim-visaged shapes of dread?
Untenanting its beauteous clay
My Sara's soul has winged its way,
 And hovers round my head!

I felt it prompt the tender dream,
When slowly sank the day's last gleam;
 You roused each gentler sense,
As sighing o'er the blossom's bloom
Meek evening wakes its soft perfume
 With viewless influence.

And hark, my Love! The sea-breeze moans
Through yon reft house! O'er rolling stones
 In bold ambitious sweep,
The onward-surging tides supply
The silence of the cloudless sky
 With mimic thunders deep.

Dark reddening from the channelled Isle*
(Where stands one solitary pile
 Unslated by the blast)
The watchfire, like a sullen star,
Twinkles to many a dozing tar
 Rude cradled on the mast.

Even there—beneath that light-house tower—
In the tumultuous evil hour
 Ere peace with Sara came,
Time was, I should have thought it sweet
To count the echoings of my feet,
 And watch the storm-vexed flame.

* The Holmes, in the Bristol Channel.

And there in black soul-jaundiced fit
A sad gloom-pampered man to sit,
And listen to the roar:
When mountain surges bellowing deep
With an uncouth monster leap
Plunged foaming on the shore.

Then by the lightning's blaze to mark
Some toiling tempest-shattered bark;
Her vain distress-guns hear;
And when a second sheet of light
Flashed o'er the blackness of the night—
To see no vessel there!

But fancy now more gaily sings;
Or if awhile she droop her wings,
As sky-larks 'mid the corn,
On summer fields she grounds her breast:
The oblivious poppy o'er her nest
Nods, till returning morn.

O mark those smiling tears, that swell
The opened rose! From heaven they fell,
And with the sun-beam blend.
Blest visitations from above,
Such are the tender woes of love
Fostering the heart they bend!

When stormy midnight howling round
Beats on our roof with clattering sound,
To me your arms you'll stretch:
Great God! you'll say—To us so kind,
O shelter from this loud bleak wind
The houseless, friendless wretch!

The tears that tremble down your cheek
Shall bathe my kisses chaste and meek
In pity's dew divine;
And from your heart the sighs that steal
Shall make your rising bosom feel
The answering swell of mine!

How oft, my Love! with shapings sweet
I paint the moment, we shall meet!
With eager speed I dart—
I seize you in the vacant air,
And fancy, with a husband's care
I press you to my heart!

'Tis said, in summer's evening hour
Flashes the golden-coloured flower
A fair electric flame:
And so shall flash my love-charged eye
When all the heart's big ecstasy
Shoots rapid through the frame!

LINES TO A FRIEND,

IN ANSWER TO A MELANCHOLY LETTER.

AWAY, those cloudy looks, that labouring sigh,
The peevish offspring of a sickly hour!
Nor meanly thus complain of fortune's power,
When the blind gamester throws a luckless die.

Yon setting sun flashes a mournful gleam
Behind those broken clouds, his stormy train:
To-morrow shall the many-coloured main
In brightness roll beneath his orient beam!

Wild, as the autumnal gust, the hand of Time
Flies o'er his mystic lyre: in shadowy dance
The alternate groups of joy and grief advance
Responsive to his varying strains sublime!

Bears on its wing each hour a load of fate;
The swain, who, lulled by Seine's mild murmurs, led
His weary oxen to their nightly shed,
To-day may rule a tempest-troubled state.

Nor shall not fortune with a vengeful smile
Survey the sanguinary despot's might,
And haply hurl the pageant from his height
Unwept to wander in some savage isle.

There shiv'ring sad beneath the tempest's frown
Round his tired limbs to wrap the purple vest;
And mixed with nails and beads, an equal jest!
Barter for food the jewels of his crown.

RELIGIOUS MUSINGS;

A DESULTORY POEM WRITTEN ON THE CHRISTMAS EVE OF 1794.



HIS is the time, when most divine to hear,
The voice of adoration rouses me,
As with a Cherub's trump: and high upborne,
Yea, mingling with the choir, I seem to view
The vision of the heavenly multitude,
Who hymned the song of peace o'er Bethlehem's fields!
Yet Thou more bright than all the angel blaze,
That harbingered Thy birth, Thou, Man of woes!
Despised Galilean! For the great
Invisible (by symbols only seen)
With a peculiar and surpassing light
Shines from the visage of the oppressed good man,
When heedless of himself the scourged Saint
Mourns for the oppressor. Fair the vernal mead,
Fair the high grove, the sea, the sun, the stars;
True impress each of their creating Sire!
Yet nor high grove, nor many-coloured mead,
Nor the green ocean with his thousand isles,
Nor the starred azure, nor the sovran sun,
E'er with such majesty of portraiture
Imaged the supreme beauty uncreate,
As Thou, meek Saviour! at the fearful hour
When Thy insulted anguish winged the prayer

Harped by Archangels, when they sing of mercy!
Which when the Almighty heard from forth His
throne
Diviner light filled Heaven with ecstasy!
Heaven's hymnings paused: and Hell her yawning
Closed a brief moment. [mouth

Lovely was the death
Of Him whose life was Love! Holy with power
He on the thought-benighted sceptic beamed
Manifest Godhead, melting into day
What floating mists of dark idolatry
Broke and misshaped the omnipresent Sire:
And first by fear uncharmed the drowsed Soul.
Till of its nobler nature it 'gan feel
Dim recollections; and thence soared to hope,
Strong to believe whate'er of mystic good
The Eternal dooms for His immortal sons.
From hope and firmer faith to perfect love
Attracted and absorbed: and centred there
God only to behold, and know, and feel,
Till by exclusive consciousness of God
All self-annihilated it shall make
God its identity: God all in all!
We and our Father one!

And blest are they,
Who in this fleshly world, the elect of heaven,
Their strong eye darting through the deeds of men,
Adore with steadfast unpresuming gaze
Him Nature's essence, mind, and energy!
And gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
Treading beneath their feet all visible things
As steps, that upward to their Father's throne

Lead gradual—else nor glorified nor loved.
They nor contempt embosom nor revenge:
For they dare know of what may seem deform
The Supreme Fair sole operant: in Whose sight
All things are pure, His strong controlling Love
Alike from all educing perfect good.
Theirs too celestial courage, inly armed—
Dwarfing earth's giant brood, what time they muse
On their great Father, great beyond compare!
And marching onwards view high o'er their heads
His waving banners of Omnipotence.

Who the Creator love, created might
Dread not: within their tents no terrors walk.
For they are holy things before the Lord
Aye unprofaned, though earth should league with hell;
God's altar grasping with an eager hand
Fear, the wild-visaged, pale, eye-starting wretch,
Sure-refuged hears his hot pursuing fiends
Yell at vain distance. Soon refreshed from Heaven
He calms the throb and tempest of his heart.
His countenance settles; a soft solemn bliss
Swims in his eye—his swimming eye upraised:
And Faith's whole armour glitters on his limbs!
And thus transfigured with a dreadless awe,
A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
All things of terrible seeming: yea, unmoved
Views e'en the immitigable ministers
That shower down vengeance on these latter days.
For kindling with intenser Deity
From the celestial Mercy-seat they come,
And at the renovating wells of love
Have filled their vials with salutary wrath,
To sickly nature more medicinal

Than what soft balm the weeping good man pours
Into the lone despoiled traveller's wounds!

Thus from the elect, regenerate through faith,
Pass the dark passions and what thirsty cares
Drink up the spirit, and the dim regards
Self-centre. Lo they vanish! or acquire
New names, new features—by supernal grace
Enrobed with light, and naturalized in Heaven.
As when a shepherd on a vernal morn
Through some thick fog creeps timorous with slow
Darkling he fixes on the immediate road [foot,
His downward eye: all else of fairest kind
Hid or deformed. But lo! the bursting sun!
Touched by the enchantment of that sudden beam
Straight the black vapour melteth, and in globes
Of dewy glitter gems each plant and tree;
On every leaf, on every blade it hangs!
Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,
And wide around the landscape streams with glory!

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from His small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! from Himself he flies,
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze,
Views all creation; and He loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the most High!
Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.
But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts

Unfeeling of our universal Sire,
And that in His vast family no Cain
Injures uninjured (in her best-aimed blow
Victorious murder a blind suicide)
Haply for this some younger Angel now
Looks down on human nature: and, behold!
A sea of blood bestrewed with wrecks, where mad
Embattling interests on each other rush
With unhelmed rage!

'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
This fraternizes man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;
This the worst superstition, Him except
Aught to desire, Supreme Reality!
The plenitude and permanence of bliss!
O Fiends of Superstition! not that oft
The erring priest hath stained with brother's blood
Your grisly idols, not for this may wrath
Thunder against you from the Holy One!
But o'er some plain that steameth to the sun,
Peopled with death; or where more hideous trade
Loud-laughing packs his bales of human anguish;
I will raise up a mourning, O ye Fiends!
And curse your spells, that film the eye of faith,
Hiding the present God; whose Presence lost,
The moral world's cohesion, we become
An anarchy of Spirits! Toy-bewitched,
Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
No common centre man, no common sire
Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,

'Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
Feeling himself, his own low self the whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one self! self, that no alien knows!
Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
Yet all of all possessing! This is Faith!
This the Messiah's destined victory!
But first offences needs must come! Even now*
(Black Hell laughs horrible—to hear the scoff!)
Thee to defend, meek Galilean! Thee
And Thy mild laws of love unutterable,
Mistrust and enmity have burst the bands
Of social peace; and listening treachery lurks
With pious fraud to snare a brother's life;
And childless widows o'er the groaning land
Wail numberless; and orphans weep for bread
Thee to defend, dear Saviour of mankind!
Thee, Lamb of God! Thee, blameless Prince of peace!
From all sides rush the thirsty brood of War,—
Austria, and that foul Woman of the North,
The lustful murderess of her wedded lord!

* January 21st, 1794, in the debate on the address to his Majesty, on the speech from the Throne, the Earl of Guildford moved an amendment to the following effect:—"That the House hoped his Majesty would seize the earliest opportunity to conclude a peace with France," &c. This motion was opposed by the Duke of Portland, who "considered the war to be merely grounded on one principle—the preservation of the Christian Religion." May 30th, 1794, the Duke of Bedford moved a number of resolutions, with a view to the establishment of a peace with France. He was opposed (among others) by Lord Abingdon in these remarkable words:—"The best road to Peace, my Lords, is War! and War carried on in the same manner in which we are taught to worship our Creator, namely, with all our souls, and with all our minds, and with all our hearts, and with all our strength."

And he, connatural mind! whom (in their songs
So bards of elder time had haply feigned)
Some Fury fondled in her hate to man,
Bidding her serpent hair in mazy surge
Lick his young face, and at his mouth imbreathe
Horrible sympathy! And leagued with these
Each petty German princeling, nursed in gore!
Soul-hardened barterers of human blood!
Death's prime slave-merchants! Scorpion-whips of
Nor least in savagery of holy zeal, [Fate!
Apt for the yoke, the race degenerate,
Whom Britain erst had blushed to call her sons!
Thee to defend the Moloch priest prefers
The prayer of hate, and bellows to the herd
That Deity, accomplice Deity
In the fierce jealousy of wakened wrath
Will go forth with our armies and our fleets
To scatter the red ruin on their foes!
O blasphemy! to mingle fiendish deeds
With blessedness!

Lord of unsleeping Love,*
From everlasting Thou! We shall not die.
These, even these, in mercy didst Thou form,
Teachers of good through evil, by brief wrong
Making truth lovely, and her future might
Magnetic o'er the fixed untrembling heart.
In the primeval age a dateless while
The vacant shepherd wandered with his flock,
Pitching his tent where'er the green grass waved.
But soon imagination conjured up

* "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment," &c.—*Habakkuk* i. 12.

A host of new desires: with busy aim,
Each for himself, earth's eager children toiled.
So property began, twy-streaming fount,
Whence vice and virtue flow, honey and gall.
Hence the soft couch, and many-coloured robe,
The timbrel, and arched dome and costly feast,
With all the inventive arts, that nursed the soul
To forms of beauty, and by sen .al wants
Unsensualized the mind, which in the means
Learnt to forget the grossness of the end,
Best pleasured with its own activity.
And hence disease that withers manhood's arm,
The daggered envy, spirit-quenching want,
Warriors, and lords, and priests—all the sore ills
That vex and desolate our mortal life.
Wide-wasting ills! yet each the immediate source
Of mightier good. Their keen necessities
To ceaseless action goading human thought
Have made earth's reasoning animal her lord;
And the pale-featured sage's trembling hand
Strong as a host of armed deities,
Such as the blind Ionian fabled erst.

From avarice thus, from luxury and war
Sprang heavenly science; and from science freedom.
O'er wakened realms philosophers and bards
Spread in concentric circles: they whose souls,
Conscious of their high dignities from God,
Brook not wealth's rivalry; and they who long
Enamoured with the charms of order, hate
The unseemly disproportion: and whoe'er
Turn with mild sorrow from the victor's car
And the low puppetry of thrones, to muse
On that blest triumph, when the patriot Sage

Called the red lightnings from the o'er-rushing cloud
And dashed the beauteous terrors on the earth
Smiling majestic. Such a phalanx ne'er
Measured firm paces to the calming sound
Of Spartan flute! These on the fated day,
When, stung to rage by pity, eloquent men [tribes
Have roused with pealing voice the unnumbered
That toil and groan and bleed, hungry and blind,—
These hushed awhile with patient eye serene
Shall watch the mad careering of the storm;
Then o'er the wild and wavy chaos rush
And tame the outrageous mass, with plastic might
Moulding confusion to such perfect forms,
As erst were wont,—bright visions of the day!—
To float before them, when, the summer noon,
Beneath some arched romantic rock reclined
They felt the sea breeze lift their youthful locks;
Or in the month of blossoms, at mild eve,
Wandering with desultory feet inhaled
The wafted perfumes, and the flocks and woods
And many-tinted streams and setting sun
With all his gorgeous company of clouds
Ecstatic gazed! then homeward as they strayed
Cast the sad eye to earth, and inly mused
Why there was misery in a world so fair.
Ah! far removed from all that glads the sense,
From all that softens or ennobles Man,
The wretched many! bent beneath their loads
They gape at pageant power, nor recognize
Their cots' transmuted plunder! From the tree
Of knowledge, ere the vernal sap had risen
Rudely disbranched! Blessed society!
Fitliest depictured by some sun-scorched waste,
Where oft majestic through the tainted noon

The Simoom sails, before whose purple pomp
Who falls not prostrate dies! And where by night,
Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs
The lion couches; or hyæna dips
Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;
Or serpent plants his vast moon-glittering bulk,
Caught in whose monstrous twine Behemoth* yells,
His bones loud-crashing!
O ye numberless,
Whom foul oppression's ruffian gluttony
Drives from life's plenteous feast! O thou poor wretch
Who nursed in darkness and made wild by want,
Roamest for prey, yea thy unnatural hand
Dost lift to deeds of blood! O pale-eyed form,
The victim of seduction, doomed to know
Polluted nights and days of blasphemy;
Who in loathed orgies with lewd wassailers
Must gaily laugh, while thy remembered home
Gnaws like a viper at thy secret heart!
O aged women! ye who weekly catch
The morsel tossed by law-forced charity,
And die so slowly, that none call it murder!
O loathly suppliants! ye, that unreceived
Totter heart-broken from the closing gates
Of the full Lazar house: or, gazing, stand
Sick with despair! O ye to glory's field
Forced or ensnared, who, as ye gasp in death,
Bleed with new wounds beneath the vulture's beak!
O thou poor widow, who in dreams dost view
Thy husband's mangled corse, and from short doze

* Behemoth, in Hebrew, signifies wild beasts in general. Some believe it is the elephant, some the hippopotamus; some affirm it is the wild bull. Poetically, it designates any large quadruped.

Start'st with a shriek; or in thy half-thatched cot
Waked by the wintry night-storm, wet and cold,
Cow'rst o'er thy screaming baby! Rest awhile,
Children of wretchedness! More groans must rise,
More blood must steam, or ere your wrongs be full.
Yet is the day of retribution nigh:
The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal:
And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire
The innumerable multitude of wrongs
By man on man inflicted! Rest awhile,
Children of wretchedness! The hour is nigh;
And lo! the great, the rich, the mighty men,
The Kings and the chief captains of the world,
With all that fixed on high like stars of Heaven
Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,
Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit
Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.
Even now the storm begins; * each gentle name,
Faith and meek piety, with fearful joy
Tremble far-off—for lo! the giant Frenzy
Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm
Mocketh high heaven; burst hideous from the cell
Where the old hag, unconquerable, huge,
Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits
Nursing the impatient earthquake.

O return!
Pure Faith! meek Piety! The abhorred form
Whose scarlet robe was stiff with earthly pomp,
Who drank iniquity in cups of gold,
Whose names were many and all blasphemous,
Hath met the horrible judgment! Whence that cry?
The mighty army of foul spirits shrieked,

* Alluding to the French Revolution.

Disherited of earth! For she hath fallen
On whose black front was written Mystery;
She that reeled heavily, whose wine was blood;
She that worked whoredom with the demon **Power**,
And from the dark embrace all evil things
Brought forth and nurtured: mitred Atheism!
And patient Folly who on bended knee
Gives back the steel that stabbed him; and **pale Fear**
Haunted by ghastlier shapings than surround
Moon-blasted Madness when he yells at **midnight**!
Return, pure Faith! return, meek Piety!
The kingdoms of the world are yours: each **heart**
Self-governed, the vast family of love
Raised from the common earth by common **toil**
Enjoy the equal produce. Such delights
As float to earth, permitted visitants!
When in some hour of solemn jubilee
The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatched from beds of amaranth,
And they, that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!
The favoured good man in his lonely walk
Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
Strange bliss which he shall recognise in **heaven**.
And such delights, such strange beatitudes
Seize on my young anticipating heart
When that blest future rushes on my view!
For in His own and in His Father's might
The Saviour comes! While as the thousand **years**
Lead up their mystic dance, the desert **shouts**!
Old ocean claps his hands! The mighty **dead**
Rise to new life, whoe'er from earliest time

With conscious zeal had urged love's wondrous plan,
Coadjutors of God. To Milton's trump
The high groves of the renovated earth
Unbosom their glad echoes: inly hushed,
Adoring Newton his serener eye
Raises to heaven: and he of mortal kind
Wisest, he* first who marked the ideal tribes
Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.
Lo! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage,
Him, full of years, from his loved native land
Statesmen blood-stained and priests idolatrous
By dark lies maddening the blind multitude
Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying he retired,
And mused expectant on these promised years.

O years! the blest pre-eminence of saints!
Ye sweep athwart my gaze, so heavenly bright,
The wings that veil the adoring Seraphs' eyes,
What time they bend before the jasper throne†
Reflect no lovelier hues! Yet ye depart,
And all beyond is darkness! Heights most strange,
Whence Fancy falls, fluttering her idle wing.
For who of woman born may paint the hour.
When seized in his mid course, the sun shall wane
Making noon ghastly! Who of woman born
May image in the workings of his thought,
How the black-visaged, red-eyed fiend outstretched‡
Beneath the unsteady feet of Nature groans,
In feverous slumbers—destined then to wake,

* David Hartley.

† Rev. chap. iv. v. 2 and 3:—"And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a Throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the Throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone," &c.

‡ The final destruction impersonated

When fiery whirlwinds thunder his dread name
And Angels shout, destruction! How his arm
The last great Spirit lifting high in air
Shall swear by Him, the ever-living One,
Time is no more!

Believe thou, O my soul,
Life is a vision shadowy of truth;
And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
Shapes of a dream! The veiling clouds retire,
And lo! the throne of the redeeming God
Forth flashing unimaginable day
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and deepest hell.

Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity!
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material mass
In organizing surge! Holies of God!
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir. Till then
I discipline my young noviciate thought
In ministeries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters—The glad stream
Flows to the ray, and warbles as it flows.

THE

RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

"Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit, et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum. nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus." —T. BURNET: *Archæol. Phil.* p. 68.

PART THE FIRST.

An ancient Mariner meeteththree Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

IT is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship drawn by a storm toward the south pole.

And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

At length did cross an Albatross:
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward, through fog and floating ice.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross!

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

PART THE SECOND.

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe;
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow* streamed off free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

* In the former edition the line was,

The furrow followed free;

but I had not been long on board a ship, before I perceived that this was the image as seen by a spectator from the shore, or from another vessel. From the ship itself the *Wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern.

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART THE THIRD.

THERE passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! A weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
And as if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:

Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy,

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered,
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a DEATH? and are there two?
Is DEATH that woman's mate?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

The spectre-woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:

Like vessel, like crew!

Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death, and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've, I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of the Moon,

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till climb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead.

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

PART THE FOURTH.

"I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.*

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm,

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

* For the last two lines of this stanza, I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned, and in part composed.

And envieth that *they* should live, and so many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay, like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fixedness, he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country, and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

The spell begins to break.

PART THE FIFTH.

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds, and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about;

And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspirited, and the ship moves on;

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:

The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.

But not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast:
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,

A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The lonesome spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;

The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

"Is it he?" quoth one, "is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low,
The harmless Albatross.

"The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow."

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do."

PART THE SIXTH.

First Voice.

But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?

Second Voice.

Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.

First Voice.

But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward, faster than human life could endure.

Second Voice.

The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—

O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

And appear in their own forms of light.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART THE SEVENTH.

The Hermit of the Wood,

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:

It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?"

"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said—
"And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along:
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look"—
(The Pilot made reply)
"I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!"
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:

The ship suddenly sinketh.

It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned,
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row."

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The Hermit crossed his brow.
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?"

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man.
He rose the morrow morn.

SIBYLLINE LEAVES.

HIS OCCASIONED BY POLITICAL EVENTS

OR FEELINGS CONNECTED

WITH THEM.

"WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my country! Am I to be blamed?
But, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark of the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled.
What wonder if a poet, now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a Lover or a Child."

WORDSWORTH.

ODE TO THE DEPARTING YEAR.*

Ἰοὺ, ἰοὺ, ὦ ὦ κακά.
Ὑπ' αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος
Στροβεῖ, ταράσσων φρουμίοις ἐφημίοις,
* * * * * *
Τὸ μέλλον ἥξει. Καὶ σύ μ' ἐν τάχει παρὼν
Ἄγαν γ' ἀληθόμαντιν οἰκτείρας ἐρεῖς.
ÆSCHYL. *Agam.* 1225.

ARGUMENT.

The Ode commences with an Address to the Divine Providence, that regulates into one vast harmony all the events of time, however calamitous some of them may appear to mortals. The second Strophe calls on men to suspend their private joys and sorrows, and devote them for a while to the cause of human nature in general. The first Epode speaks of the Empress of Russia, who died of an apoplexy on the 17th of November, 1796; having just concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Kings combined against France. The first and second Antistrophe describe the Image of the Departing Year, &c. as in a vision. The second Epode prophesies, in anguish of spirit, the downfall of this country.

I.

SPIRIT who sweepest the wild harp of Time!
It is most hard, with an untroubled ear
Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!
Yet, mine eye fixed on Heaven's unchanging clime,
Long had I listened, free from mortal fear,

* This Ode was composed on the 24th, 25th, and 26th days of December, 1796; and was first published on the last day of that year.

With inward stillness, and submitted mind;
When lo! its folds far waving on the wind,
I saw the train of the Departing Year!
Starting from my silent sadness
Then with no unholy madness,
Ere yet the entered cloud foreclosed my sight,
I raised the impetuous song, and solemnised his flight.

II.

Hither, from the recent tomb,
From the prison's direr gloom,
From distemper's midnight anguish;
And thence, where poverty doth waste and languish;
Or where, his two bright torches blending,
Love illumines manhood's maze;
Or where o'er cradled infants bending
Hope has fixed her wishful gaze;
Hither, in perplexed dance,
Ye Woes! ye young-eyed Joys! advance!

By Time's wild harp, and by the hand
Whose indefatigable sweep
Raises its fateful strings from sleep,
I bid you haste, a mixed tumultuous band!
From every private bower,
And each domestic hearth,
Haste for one solemn hour;
And with a loud and yet a louder voice,
O'er Nature struggling in portentous birth,
Weep and rejoice!
Still echoes the dread Name, that o'er the earth
Let slip the storm, and woke the brood of Hell.
And now advance in saintly jubilee

Justice and Truth! They too have heard thy spell
They too obey thy name, Divinest Liberty!

III.

I marked Ambition in his war-array!
I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—
"Ah! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay?
Groans not her chariot on its onward way?"
Fly, mailed Monarch, fly!
Stunned by Death's twice mortal mace,
No more on murder's lurid face
The insatiate hag shall gloat with drunken eye!
Manes of the unnumbered slain!
Ye that gasped on Warsaw's plain!
Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,
When human ruin choked the streams,
Fell in conquest's glutted hour,
'Mid women's shrieks and infants' screams!
Spirits of the uncoffined slain,
Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,
Oft, at night, in misty train,
Rush around her narrow dwelling!
The exterminating fiend is fled—
(Foul her life, and dark her doom)
Mighty armies of the dead,
Dance like death-fires round her tomb!
Then with prophetic song relate,
Each some tyrant-murderer's fate!

IV.

Departing Year! 'twas on no earthly shore
My soul beheld thy vision! Where alone,
Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne,
Aye Memory sits: thy robe inscribed with gore,

With many an unimaginable groan
Thou storied'st thy sad hours! Silence ensued,
Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,
Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.
Then, his eye wild ardours glancing,
From the choired gods advancing,
The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet,
And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

V.

Throughout the blissful throng,
Hushed were harp and song:
Till, wheeling round the throne the Lampads seven,
(The mystic Words of Heaven)
Permissive signal make;
The fervent Spirit bowed, then spread his wings and spake!
"Thou in stormy blackness throning
Love and uncreated Light,
By the Earth's unsolaced groaning,
Seize thy terrors, Arm of might!
By peace, with proffered insult scared,
Masked hate and envying scorn!
By years of havoc yet unborn!
And hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bared!
But chief by Afric's wrongs,
Strange, horrible, and foul!
By what deep guilt belongs
To the deaf Synod, 'full of gifts and lies!'
By wealth's insensate laugh! by torture's howl!
Avenger, rise!
For ever shall the thankless Island scowl,
Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow?

Speak! from thy storm-black Heaven, O speak aloud!
And on the darkling foe
Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud!
O dart the flash! O rise and deal the blow!
The *Past* to thee, *to thee* the *Future* cries!
Hark! how wide Nature joins her groans below!
Rise, God of Nature! rise."

VI.

The voice had ceased, the vision fled;
Yet still I gasped and reeled with dread,
And ever, when the dream of night
Renews the phantom to my sight,
Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs;
My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start;
My brain with horrid tumult swims;
Wild is the tempest of my heart;
And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toil of death!
No stranger agony confounds
The soldier on the war-field spread,
When all foredone with toil and wounds,
Death-like he dozes among heaps of dead!
(The strife is o'er, the day-light fled,
And the night-wind clamours hoarse!
See! the starting wretch's head
Lies pillowed on a brother's corse!)

VII.

Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,
O Albion! O my mother Isle!
Thy vallies, fair as Eden's bowers,
Glitter green with sunny showers;

'Thy grassy uplands' gentle swell
Echo to the bleat of flocks;
(Those grassy hills, those glittering dells
Proudly ramparted with rocks)
And Ocean 'mid his uproar wild
Speaks safety to his Island-child!
Hence, for many a fearless age,
Has social quiet loved thy shore;
Nor ever proud Invader's rage
Or sacked thy towers, or stained thy fields with gore.

VIII.

Abandoned of Heaven! mad avarice thy guide,
At cowardly distance, yet kindling with pride—
'Mid thy herds and thy corn-fields secure thou hast stood,
And joined the wild yelling of famine and blood!
The nations curse thee! They with eager wondering
Shall hear Destruction, like a vulture, scream!
Strange-eyed Destruction! who with many a dream
Of central fires through nether seas upthundering
Soothes her fierce solitude; yet as she lies
By livid fount, or red volcanic stream,
If ever to her lidless dragon-eyes,
O Albion! thy predestined ruins rise,
The fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,
Muttering distempered triumph in her charmed sleep.

IX.

Away, my soul, away!
In vain, in vain the birds of warning sing—
And hark! I hear the famished brood of prey
Flap their dank pennons on the groaning wind!
Away, my soul, away!

I unpartaking of the evil thing,
With daily prayer and daily toil
Soliciting for food my scanty soil,
Have wailed my country with a loud Lament.
Now I recentre my immortal mind
In the deep sabbath of meek self-content;
Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim
God's Image, sister of the Seraphim.

FRANCE.

AN ODE.

I.

E Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may control! [ye roll,
Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe'er
Yield homage only to eternal laws!
Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save when your own imperious branches swinging
Have made a solemn music of the wind!
Where, like a man beloved of God,
Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!

Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II.

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,
And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared!
With what a joy my lofty gratulation
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
The Monarchs marched in evil day,
And Britain joined the dire array;
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
Though many friendships, many youthful lovers
Had sworn the patriot emotion
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves;
Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
And shame too long delayed and vain retreat!
For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame;
But blessed the paeans of delivered France,
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

III.

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream
With that sweet music of deliverance strove?
Though all the feared and drunken passions wove

A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream ?
Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,
The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light !"
And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,
The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright;
When France her front deep-scarred and gory ;
Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory ;
When, insupportably advancing,
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's tramp ;
While timid looks of fury glancing,
Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;
Then I reproached my fears that would not flee ;
"And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her lore
In the low huts of them that toil and groan !
And, conquering by her happiness alone,
Shall France compel the nations to be free,
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their own."

IV.

Forgive me, Freedom ! O forgive those dreams !
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams !
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes !
To scatter rage and traitorous guilt,
Where Peace her jealous home had built;

A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils,
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

V.

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,

Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there

February, 1798.

FEARS IN SOLITUDE.

WRITTEN IN APRIL 1798, DURING THE ALARM OF AN INVASION.



GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills,
A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely; but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
Oh! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook!
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly, as had made
His early manhood more securely wise!
Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
While from the singing-lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best,)
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of nature!

And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing-lark,
That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God! it is a melancholy thing
For such a man, who would full fain preserve
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
For all his human brethren—O my God!
It is indeed a melancholy thing,
And weighs upon the heart, that he must think
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
And undetermined conflict—even now,
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun!
We have offended, oh! my countrymen!
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,
Associations and societies,

A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting guild,
One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
For gold, as at a market! The sweet words
Of Christian promise, words that even yet
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,
Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
Oh! blasphemous! the book of life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
For all must swear—all and in every place,
College and wharf, council and justice-court;
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel; the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet, Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious Sun in Heaven,
Cries out, "Where is it?"

Thankless too for peace;
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas)
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved

To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants! No guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation or contingency,
However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause; and forth,
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in Heaven,)
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child,
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and deceit,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed;—
As though he had no wife to pine for him,

No God to judge him! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings?

Spare us yet awhile,
Father and God! Oh! spare us yet awhile!
Oh! let not English women drag their flight
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
Laughed at the breast! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
Which grow up with you round the same fire-side,
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure!
Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder; and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes
And all that lifts the spirit! Stand we forth;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss us lifly on its waves
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
Swept from our shores! And oh! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy!

I have told,
O Britons! O my brethren! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mis-timed;
For never can true courage dwell with them,
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country!

Such have I been deemed—
But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy

To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!

May my fears,
My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roared and died away
In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way; and, lo! recalled
From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,

This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society—
Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!
And now, beloved Stowey! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

Nether Stowey,
April 25th, 1798.

RECANTATION.

ILLUSTRATED IN THE STORY OF THE MAD OX.

I.

AN Ox, long fed with musty hay,
And worked with yoke and chain,
Was turned out on an April day,
When fields are in their best array,
And growing grasses sparkle gay
At once with sun and rain.

II.

The grass was fine, the sun was bright:
With truth I may aver it;
The Ox was glad, as well he might,
Thought a green meadow no bad sight,
And frisked, to show his huge delight,
Much like a beast of spirit.

III.

"Stop, neighbours! stop! why these alarms?
The Ox is only glad—"
But still they pour from cots and farms—
Halloo! the parish is up in arms,
(A hoaxing-hunt has always charms)
Halloo! the Ox is mad.

IV.

The frighted beast scamper'd about;
Plunge! through the hedge he drove—
The mob pursue with hideous rout,
A bull-dog fastens on his snout;
He gores the dog, his tongue hangs out;
He's mad! he's mad, by Jove!

V.

"Stop, neighbours, stop!" aloud did call
A sage of sober hue.
But all, at once, on him they fall,
And women squeak and children squall,
"What! would you have him toss us all?
And damme! who are you?"

VI.

Oh! hapless sage, his ears they stun,
And curse him o'er and o'er—

"You bloody-minded dog!" cries one,
"To slit your windpipe were good fun,—
'Od blast you for an *impious** son
Of a presbyterian w—re.

VII.

"You'd have him gore the parish-priest,
And run against the altar—
You fiend!" The sage his warnings cosed,
And north and south, and west and east,
Halloo! they follow the poor beast,
Mat, Dick, Tom, Bob, and Walter.

VIII.

Old Lewis, ('twas his evil day)
Stood trembling in his shoes;
The Ox was his—what could he say?
His legs were stiffened with dismay,
The Ox ran o'er him 'mid the fray,
And gave him his death's bruise.

IX.

The frighted beast ran on—but here,
(No tale, though in print, more true is)
My muse stops short in mid career—
Nay, gentle reader! do not sneer!
I cannot choose but drop a tear,
A tear for good old Lewis!

* One of the many fine words which the most uneducated had about this time a constant opportunity of acquiring, from the sermons in the pulpit and the proclamations in the —— corners.

X.

The frighted beast ran through the town;
All followed, boy and dad,
Bull-dog, parson, shopman, clown:
The publicans rushed from the Crown,
"Halloo! hamstring him! cut him down!"
They drove the poor Ox mad.

XI.

Should you a rat to madness tease,
Why even a rat may plague you:
There's no philosopher but sees
That rage and fear are one disease—
Though that may burn and this may freeze,
They're both alike the ague.

XII.

And so this Ox, in frantic mood,
Faced round like any bull—
The mob turned tail, and he pursued,
Till they with heat and fright were stewed,
And not a chick of all this brood
But had his belly full.

XIII.

Old Nick's astride the beast, 'tis clear—
Old Nicholas, to a tittle!
But all agree, he'd disappear,
Would but the parson venture near,
And through his teeth,* right o'er the steer,
Squirt out some fasting-spittle.

* According to the superstition of the West-Countries, if you meet the Devil, you may either cut him in half with a straw, or force him to disappear by spitting over his horns

XIV.

Achilles was a warrior fleet,
The Trojans he could worry—
Our parson too was swift of feet,
But showed it chiefly in retreat;
The victor Ox scoured down the street,
The mob fled hurry-scurry.

XV.

Through gardens, lanes, and fields new ploughed,
Through his hedge, and through her hedge,
He plunged and tossed and bellowed loud,
Till in his madness he grew proud,
To see this helter-skelter crowd,
That had more wrath than courage.

XVI.

Alas! to mend the breaches wide
He made for these poor ninnies,
They all must work, whate'er betide,
Both days and months, and pay beside,
(Sad news for avarice and for pride)
A sight of golden guineas!

XVII.

But here once more to view did pop
The man that kept his senses;
And now he cried—"Stop, neighbours! stop;
The Ox is mad! I would not swop,
No! not a school-boy's farthing-top,
For all the parish-fences.

XVIII.

"The Ox is mad! Ho! Dick, Bob, Mat!"
What means this coward fuss?
"Ho! stretch this rope across the plat—
'Twill trip him up—or if not that,
Why, damme! we must lay him flat—
See, here's my blunderbuss.

XIX.

"A lying dog! just now he said
The Ox was only glad—
Let's break his presbyterian head!"
"Hush!" quoth the sage, "you've been misled;
No quarrels now—let's all make head—
You drove the poor Ox mad."

XX.

As thus I sat, in careless chat,
With the morning's wet newspaper,
In eager haste, without his hat,
As blind and blundering as a bat,
In came that fierce aristocrat,
Our pursy woollen-draper.

XXI.

And so my Muse perforce drew bit;
And in he rushed and panted—
"Well, have you heard?" No, not a whit.
"What, *ha'nt* you heard?" Come, out with it!—
"That TIERNEY votes for Mister Pitt,
And SHERIDAN'S *recanted!*"

PARLIAMENTARY OSCILLATORS.



LMOST awake? Why, what is this, and whence,
O ye right loyal men, all undefiled?
Sure, 'tis not possible that common sense
Has hitched her pullies to each heavy eye-lid?

Yet wherefore else that start, which discomposes
The drowsy waters lingering in your eye?
And are you *really* able to descry
That precipice three yards beyond your noses?

Yet flatter you I cannot, that your wit
Is much improved by this long loyal dosing;
And I admire, no more than Mr. PITT,
Your jumps and starts of patriotic prosing—

Now cluttering to the treasury cluck, like chicken,
Now with small beaks the ravenous *bill* opposing;
With serpent-tongue now stinging, and now licking
Now semi-sibilant, now smoothly glozing—

Now having faith implicit that he can't err,
Hoping his hopes, alarmed with his alarms;
And now believing him a sly enchanter,
Yet still afraid to break his brittle charms,

Lest some mad Devil suddenly unhampering,
Slap-dash! the imp should fly off with the steeple.

On revolutionary broom-stick scampering.—
O ye soft-headed and soft-hearted people,

If you can stay so long from slumber free,
My muse shall make an effort to salute 'e:
For lo! a very dainty simile
Flashed sudden through my brain, and 'twill just
suit 'e!

You know that water-fowl that cries, quack! quack!?
Full often have I seen a waggish crew
Fasten the bird of wisdom on its back,
The ivy-haunting bird, that cries, tu-whoo!

Both plunged together in the deep mill-stream,
(Mill-stream, or farm-yard pond, or mountain-
lake,)
Shrill, as a Church and Constitution scream,
Tu-whoo! quoth Broad-face, and down dives the
drake!

The green-necked drake once more pops up to view,
Stares round, cries quack! and makes an angry
pother;
Then shriller screams the bird with eye-lids blue,
The broad-faced bird! and deeper dives the other.
Ye *quacking* statesmen! 'tis even so with you—
One peasecod is not liker to another.

Even so on loyalty's decoy-pond, each
Pops up his head, as fired with British blood,
Hears once again the ministerial screech,
And once more seeks the bottom's blackest mud!

1794.

FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER,

WITH AN APOLOGETIC PREFACE.

"Me dolor incautum, me lubrica duxerit ætas,
Me tumor impulerit, me devius egerit ardor:
Te tamen haud decuit paribus concurrere telis.
En adsum: veniam, confessus crimina, posco."

CLAUD. *Epist ad Had.*

"There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart; and who is he that hath not offended with his tongue?"—*Ecclesiasticus* xix. 16.

AT the house of a gentleman, who by the principles and corresponding virtues of a sincere Christian consecrates a cultivated genius and the favourable accidents of birth, opulence, and splendid connexions, it was my good fortune to meet, in a dinner-party, with more men of celebrity in science or polite literature, than are commonly found collected round the same table. In the course of conversation, one of the party reminded an illustrious Poet, then present, of some verses which he had recited that morning, and which had appeared in a newspaper under the name of a War-Eclogue, in which Fire, Famine, and Slaughter, were introduced as the speakers. The gentleman so addressed replied, that he was rather surprised that none of us should have noticed or heard of the

poem, as it had been, at the time, a good deal talked of in Scotland. It may be easily supposed, that my feelings were at this moment not of the most comfortable kind. Of all present, one only knew, or suspected me to be the author; a man who would have established himself in the first rank of England's living poets, if the Genius of our country had not decreed that he should rather be the first in the first rank of its philosophers and scientific benefactors. It appeared the general wish to hear the lines. As my friend chose to remain silent, I chose to follow his example, and Mr. —— recited the Poem. This *he* could do with the better grace, being known to have ever been not only a firm and active Anti-Jacobin and Anti-Gallican, but likewise a zealous admirer of Mr. Pitt, both as a good man and a great statesman. As a poet exclusively, he had been amused with the Eclogue; as a poet, he recited it; and in a spirit, which made it evident, that he would have read and repeated it with the same pleasure, had his own name been attached to the imaginary object or agent.

After the recitation, our amiable host observed, that in his opinion Mr. —— had over-rated the merits of the poetry; but had they been tenfold greater, they could not have compensated for that malignity of heart, which could alone have prompted sentiments so atrocious. I perceived that my illustrious friend became greatly distressed on my account; but fortunately I was able to preserve fortitude and presence of mind enough to take up the subject without exciting even a suspicion how nearly and painfully it interested me.

What follows, is substantially the same as I then

replied, but dilated and in language less colloquial. It was not my intention, I said, to justify the publication, whatever its author's feelings might have been at the time of composing it. That they are calculated to call forth so severe a reprobation from a good man, is not the worst feature of such poems. Their moral deformity is aggravated in proportion to the pleasure which they are capable of affording to vindictive, turbulent, and unprincipled readers. Could it be supposed, though for a moment, that the author seriously wished what he had thus wildly imagined, even the attempt to palliate an inhumanity so monstrous would be an insult to the hearers. But it seemed to me worthy of consideration, whether the mood of mind, and the general state of sensations, in which a poet produces such vivid and fantastic images, is likely to co-exist, or is even compatible with, that gloomy and deliberate ferocity which a serious wish to realize them would pre-suppose. It had been often observed, and all my experience tended to confirm the observation, that prospects of pain and evil to others, and in general, all deep feelings of revenge, are commonly expressed in a few words, ironically tame, and mild. The mind under so direful and fiend-like an influence, seems to take a morbid pleasure in contrasting the intensity of its wishes and feelings, with the slightness or levity of the expressions by which they are hinted; and indeed feelings so intense and solitary, if they were not precluded (as in almost all cases they would be) by a constitutional activity of fancy and association, and by the specific joyousness combined with it, would assuredly themselves preclude such activity. Passion, in its own quality, is

the antagonist of action; though in an ordinary and natural degree the former alternates with the latter, and thereby revives and strengthens it. But the more intense and insane the passion is, the fewer and the more fixed are the correspondent forms and notions. A rooted hatred, an inveterate thirst of revenge, is a sort of madness, and still eddies round its favourite object, and exercises as it were a perpetual tautology of mind in thoughts and words, which admit of no adequate substitutes. Like a fish in a globe of glass, it moves restlessly round and round the scanty circumference, which it cannot leave without losing its vital element.

There is a second character of such imaginary representations as spring from a real and earnest desire of evil to another, which we often see in real life, and might even anticipate from the nature of the mind. The images, I mean, that a vindictive man places before his imagination, will most often be taken from the realities of life: they will be images of pain and suffering which he has himself seen inflicted on other men, and which he can fancy himself as inflicting on the object of his hatred. I will suppose that we had heard at different times two common sailors, each speaking of some one who had wronged or offended him; that the first with apparent violence had devoted every part of his adversary's body and soul to all the horrid phantoms and fantastic places that ever Quevedo dreamt of, and this in a rapid flow of those outrageous and wildly combined execrations, which too often with our lower classes serve for escape-valves to carry off the excess of their passions, as so much superfluous steam that would endanger the vessel if it were retained.

The other, on the contrary, with that sort of calmness of tone which is to the ear what the paleness of anger is to the eye, shall simply say, "If I chance to be made boatswain, as I hope I soon shall, and can but once get that fellow under my hand (and I shall be upon the watch for him), I'll tickle his pretty skin! I won't hurt him! oh no! I'll only cut the —— —— to the *liver!*" I dare appeal to all present, which of the two they would regard as the least deceptive symptom of deliberate malignity? nay, whether it would surprise them to see the first fellow, an hour or two afterwards, cordially shaking hands with the very man, the fractional parts of whose body and soul he had been so charitably disposing of; or even perhaps risking his life for him. What language Shakespeare considered characteristic of malignant disposition, we see in the speech of the good-natured Gratiano, who spoke "an infinite deal of nothing more than any man in all Venice;"

"—— Too wild, too rude and bold of voice,"

the skipping spirit, whose thoughts and words reciprocally ran away with each other;

"—— O be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused!"

and the wild fancies that follow, contrasted with Shylock's tranquil "I stand here for Law."

Or, to take a case more analogous to the present subject, should we hold it either fair or charitable to believe it to have been Dante's serious wish, that all the persons mentioned by him, (many recently departed, and some even alive at the time,) should actually suffer the fantastic and horrible punishments, to which he has sentenced them in his Hell

and Purgatory? Or what shall we say of the passages in which Bishop Jeremy Taylor anticipates the state of those who, vicious themselves, have been the cause of vice and misery to their fellow-creatures? Could we endure for a moment to think that a spirit, like Bishop Taylor's, burning with Christian love; that a man constitutionally overflowing with pleasurable kindliness; who scarcely even in a casual illustration introduces the image of woman, child, or bird, but he embalms the thought with so rich a tenderness, as makes the very words seem beauties and fragments of poetry from a Euripides or Simonides;—can we endure to think, that a man so natured and so disciplined, did at the time of composing this horrible picture, attach a sober feeling of reality to the phrases? or that he would have described in the same tone of justification, in the same luxuriant flow of phrases, the tortures about to be inflicted on a living individual by a verdict of the Star-Chamber? or the still more atrocious sentences executed on the Scotch anti-prelatists and schismatics, at the command, and in some instances under the very eye of the Duke of Lauderdale, and of that wretched bigot who afterwards dishonoured and forfeited the throne of Great Britain? Or do we not rather feel and understand, that these violent words were mere bubbles, flashes and electrical apparitions, from the magic cauldron of a fervid and ebullient fancy, constantly fuelled by an unexampled opulence of language?

Were I now to have read by myself for the first time the poem in question, my conclusion, I fully believe, would be, that the writer must have been some man of warm feelings and active fancy; that

he had painted to himself the circumstances that accompany war in so many vivid and yet fantastic forms, as proved that neither the images nor the feelings were the result of observation, or in any way derived from realities. I should judge, that they were the product of his own seething imagination, and therefore impregnated with that pleasurable exultation which is experienced in all energetic exertion of intellectual power; that in the same mood he had generalized the causes of the war, and then personified the abstract, and christened it by the name which he had been accustomed to hear most often associated with its management and measures. I should guess that the minister was in the author's mind at the moment of composition, as completely ἀπαθὴς, ἀναιμώσαρκος, as Anacreon's grasshopper, and that he had as little notion of a real person of flesh and blood,

"Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,"

as Milton had in the grim and terrible phantoms (half person, half allegory) which he has placed at the gates of Hell. I concluded by observing, that the poem was not calculated to excite passion in any mind, or to make any impression except on poetic readers; and that from the culpable levity, betrayed at the close of the Eclogue by the grotesque union of epigrammatic wit with allegoric personification, in the allusion to the most fearful of thoughts, I should conjecture that the "rantin Bardie," instead of really believing, much less wishing, the fate spoken of in the last line, in application to any human individual, would shrink from passing the verdict even on the Devil himself, and exclaim with poor Burns,

"But fare ye weel, auld Nickie-ben!
Oh! wad ye tak a thought an' men!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upon yon den,
Ev'n for your sake!"

I need not say that these thoughts, which are here dilated, were in such a company only rapidly suggested. Our kind host smiled, and with a courteous compliment observed, that the defence was too good for the cause. My voice faltered a little, for I was somewhat agitated; though not so much on my own account as for the uneasiness that so kind and friendly a man would feel from the thought that he had been the occasion of distressing me. At length I brought out these words: "I must now confess, Sir! that I am the author of that poem. It was written some years ago. I do not attempt to justify my past self, young as I then was; but as little as I would now write a similar poem, so far was I even then from imagining, that the lines would be taken as more or less than a sport of fancy. At all events, if I know my own heart, there was never a moment in my existence in which I should have been more ready, had Mr. Pitt's person been in hazard, to interpose my own body, and defend his life at the risk of my own."

I have prefaced the poem with this anecdote, because to have printed it without any remark might well have been understood as implying an unconditional approbation on my part, and this after many years' consideration. But if it be asked why I republished it at all, I answer, that the poem had been attributed at different times to different other persons; and what I had dared beget, I thought it

neither manly nor honourable not to dare father. From the same motives I should have published perfect copies of two poems, the one entitled The Devil's Thoughts, and the other The Two Round Spaces on the Tomb-Stone, but that the first three stanzas of the former, which were worth all the rest of the poem, and the best stanza of the remainder, were written by a friend of deserved celebrity; and because there are passages in both, which might have given offence to the religious feelings of certain readers. I myself indeed see no reason why vulgar superstitions, and absurd conceptions that deform the pure faith of a Christian, should possess a greater immunity from ridicule than stories of witches, or the fables of Greece and Rome. But there are those who deem it profaneness and irreverence to call an ape an ape, if it but wear a monk's cowl on its head; and I would rather reason with this weakness than offend it.

The passage from Jeremy Taylor to which I referred, is found in his second Sermon on Christ's Advent to Judgment; which is likewise the second in his year's course of sermons. Among many remarkable passages of the same character in those discourses, I have selected this as the most so. "But when this Lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear, then Justice shall strike and Mercy shall not hold her hands; she shall strike sore strokes, and Pity shall not break the blow. As there are treasures of good things, so hath God a treasure of wrath and fury, and scourges and scorpions; and then shall be produced the shame of lust and the malice of envy, and the groans of the oppressed and the persecutions of the saints, and the cares of covetousness and the

troubles of ambition, and the insolence of traitors and the violences of rebels, and the rage of anger and the uneasiness of impatience, and the restlessness of unlawful desires; and by this time the monsters and diseases will be numerous and intolerable, when God's heavy hand shall press the sanies and the intolerableness, the obliquity and the unreasonableness, the amazement and the disorder, the smart and the sorrow, the guilt and the punishment, out from all our sins, and pour them into one chalice, and mingle them with an infinite wrath, and make the wicked drink off all the vengeance, and force it down their unwilling throats with the violence of devils and accursed spirits."

That this Tartarean drench displays the imagination rather than the discretion of the compounder; that, in short, this passage and others of the same kind are in a bad taste, few will deny at the present day. It would doubtless have more behoved the good bishop not to be wise beyond what is written, on a subject in which Eternity is opposed to Time, and a death threatened, not the negative, but the positive Opposite of Life; a subject, therefore, which must of necessity be indescribable to the human understanding in our present state. But I can neither find nor believe, that it ever occurred to any reader to ground on such passages a charge against Bishop Taylor's humanity, or goodness of heart. I was not a little surprised therefore to find, in the Pursuits of Literature and other works, so horrible a sentence passed on Milton's moral character, for a passage in his prose-writings, as nearly parallel to this of Taylor's as two passages can well be conceived to be. All his merits, as a poet, forsooth—all the

glory of having written the Paradise Lost, are light in the scale, nay, kick the beam, compared with the atrocious malignity of heart expressed in the offensive paragraph. I remembered, in general, that Milton had concluded one of his works on Reformation, written in the fervour of his youthful imagination, in a high poetic strain, that wanted metre only to become a lyrical poem. I remembered that in the former part he had formed to himself a perfect ideal of human virtue, a character of heroic, disinterested zeal and devotion for Truth, Religion, and public Liberty, in act and in suffering, in the day of triumph and in the hour of martyrdom. Such spirits, as more excellent than others, he describes as having a more excellent reward, and as distinguished by a transcendent glory: and this reward and this glory he displays and particularises with an energy and brilliance that announced the Paradise Lost as plainly, as ever the bright purple clouds in the east announced the coming of the Sun. Milton then passes to the gloomy contrast, to such men as from motives of selfish ambition and the lust of personal aggrandizement should, against their own light, persecute truth and the true religion, and wilfully abuse the powers and gifts entrusted to them, to bring vice, blindness, misery, and slavery on their native country, on the very country that had trusted, enriched, and honoured them. Such beings, after that speedy and appropriate removal from their sphere of mischief which all good and humane men must of course desire, will, he takes for granted by parity of reason, meet with a punishment, an ignominy, and a retaliation, as much severer than other wicked men, as their guilt and its consequences were

more enormous. His description of this imaginary punishment presents more distinct pictures to the fancy than the extract from Jeremy Taylor; but the thoughts in the latter are incomparably more exaggerated and horrific. All this I knew; but I neither remembered, nor by reference and careful re-perusal could discover, any other meaning, either in Milton or Taylor, but that good men will be rewarded, and the impenitent wicked punished, in proportion to their dispositions and intentional acts in this life; and that if the punishment of the least wicked be fearful beyond conception, all words and descriptions must be so far true, that they must fall short of the punishment that awaits the transcendently wicked. Had Milton stated either his ideal of virtue, or of depravity, as an individual or individuals actually existing? Certainly not! Is his representation worded historically, or only hypothetically? Assuredly the latter! Does he express it as his own wish, that after death they should suffer these tortures? or as a general consequence, deduced from reason and revelation, that such will be their fate? Again, the latter only! His wish is expressly confined to a speedy stop being put by Providence to their power of inflicting misery on others! But did he name or refer to any persons, living or dead? No! But the calumniators of Milton dare say (for what will calumny not dare say?) that he had Laud and Strafford in his mind, while writing of remorseless persecution, and the enslavement of a free country, from motives of selfish ambition. Now, what if a stern anti-prelatist should dare say, that in speaking of the insolencies of traitors and the violences of rebels, Bishop Taylor must have individualized in his mind,

Hampden, Hollis, Pym, Fairfax, Ireton, and Milton? And what if he should take the liberty of concluding, that in the after-description the Bishop was feeding and feasting his party-hatred, and with those individuals before the eyes of his imagination enjoying, trait by trait, horror after horror, the picture of their intolerable agonies? Yet this bigot would have an equal right thus to criminate the one good and great man, as these men have to criminate the other. Milton has said, and I doubt not but that Taylor with equal truth could have said it, "that in his whole life he never spake against a man even that his skin should be grazed." He asserted this when one of his opponents (either Bishop Hall or his nephew) had called upon the women and children in the streets to take up stones and stone him (Milton). It is known that Milton repeatedly used his interest to protect the royalists; but even at a time when all lies would have been meritorious against him, no charge was made, no story pretended, that he had ever directly or indirectly engaged or assisted in their persecution. Oh! methinks there are other and far better feelings, which should be acquired by the perusal of our great elder writers. When I have before me on the same table, the works of Hammond and Baxter; when I reflect with what joy and dearness their blessed spirits are now loving each other: it seems a mournful thing that their names should be perverted to an occasion of bitterness among us, who are enjoying that happy mean which the human too-much on both sides was perhaps necessary to produce. "The tangle of delusions which stifled and distorted the growing tree of our well-being has been torn away; the parasite weeds that fed on its

very roots have been plucked up with a salutary violence. To us there remain only quiet duties, the constant care, the gradual improvement, the cautious unhazardous labours of the industrious though contented gardener—to prune, to strengthen, to engraft, and one by one to remove from its leaves and fresh shoots the slug and the caterpillar. But far be it from us to undervalue with light and senseless detraction the conscientious hardihood of our predecessors, or even to condemn in them that vehemence, to which the blessings it won for us leave us now neither temptation nor pretext. We ante-date the feelings, in order to criminate the authors, of our present liberty, light and toleration."*

If ever two great men might seem, during their whole lives, to have moved in direct opposition, though neither of them has at any time introduced the name of the other, Milton and Jeremy Taylor were they. The former commenced his career by attacking the Church-Liturgy and all set forms of prayer. The latter, but far more successfully, by defending both. Milton's next work was then against the Prelacy and the then existing Church-Government—Taylor's, in vindication and support of them. Milton became more and more a stern republican, or rather an advocate for that religious and moral aristocracy which, in his days, was called republicanism, and which, even more than royalism itself, is the direct antipode of modern Jacobinism. Taylor, as more and more sceptical concerning the fitness of men in general for power, became more and more attached to the prerogatives of monarchy. From

* The Friend, p. 54. (Vol. i. p. 82. 3rd edit.)

Calvinism, with a still decreasing respect for Fathers, Councils, and for Church-antiquity in general, Milton seems to have ended in an indifference, if not a dislike, to all forms of ecclesiastic government, and to have retreated wholly into the inward and spiritual church-communion of his own spirit with the Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Taylor, with a growing reverence for authority, an increasing sense of the insufficiency of the Scriptures without the aids of tradition and the consent of authorized interpreters, advanced as far in his approaches (not indeed to Popery, but) to Roman-Catholicism, as a conscientious minister of the English Church could well venture. Milton would be, and would utter the same, to all, on all occasions: he would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Taylor would become all things to all men, if by any means he might benefit any; hence he availed himself, in his popular writings, of opinions and representations which stand often in striking contrast with the doubts and convictions expressed in his more philosophical works. He appears, indeed, not too severely to have blamed that management of truth (istam falsitatem dispensativam) authorized and exemplified by almost all the fathers: Integrum omnino Doctoribus et cœtus Christiani antistitibus esse, ut dolos versent, falsa veris intermisceant et imprimis religionis hostes fallant, dummodo veritatis commodis et utilitati inserviant.

The same antithesis might be carried on with the elements of their several intellectual powers. Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and

by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive. In his prose, so many metaphors, so many allegorical miniatures. Taylor, eminently discursive, accumulative, and (to use one of his own words) agglomerative; still more rich in images than Milton himself, but images of fancy, and presented to the common and passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination. Whether supporting or assailing, he makes his way either by argument or by appeals to the affections, unsurpassed even by the schoolmen in subtlety, agility and logical wit, and unrivalled by the most rhetorical of the fathers in the copiousness and vividness of his expressions and illustrations. Here words that convey feelings, and words that flash images, and words of abstract notion, flow together, and at once whirl and rush onward like a stream, at once rapid and full of eddies; and yet still, interfused here and there, we see a tongue or islet of smooth water, with some picture in it of earth or sky, landscape or living group of quiet beauty.

Differing, then, so widely, and almost contrariantly, wherein did these great men agree? wherein did they resemble each other? In genius, in learning, in unfeigned piety, in blameless purity of life, and in benevolent aspirations and purposes for the moral and temporal improvement of their fellow-creatures! Both of them wrote a Latin Accidence, to render education more easy and less painful to children; both of them composed hymns and psalms proportioned to the capacity of common congregations; both nearly at the same time, set the glorious ex-

ample of publicly recommending and supporting general toleration, and the liberty both of the pulpit and the press! In the writings of neither shall we find a single sentence, like those meek deliverances to God's mercy, with which Laud accompanied his votes for the mutilations and loathsome dungeoning of Leighton and others!—nowhere such a pious prayer as we find in Bishop Hall's memoranda of his own life, concerning the subtle and witty atheist that so grievously perplexed and gravelled him at Sir Robert Drury's, till he prayed to the Lord to remove him, and behold! his prayers were heard; for shortly afterward this philistine-combatant went to London, and there perished of the plague in great misery! In short, nowhere shall we find the least approach, in the lives and writings of John Milton or Jeremy Taylor, to that guarded gentleness, to that sighing reluctance, with which the holy brethren of the Inquisition deliver over a condemned heretic to the civil magistrate, and hoping that the magistrate will treat the erring brother with all possible mildness!—the magistrate, who too well knows what would be his own fate, if he dared offend them by acting on their recommendation.

The opportunity of diverting the reader from myself to characters more worthy of his attention, has led me far beyond my first intention; but it is not unimportant to expose the false zeal which has occasioned these attacks on our elder patriots. It has been too much the fashion, first to personify the Church of England, and then to speak of different individuals, who in different ages have been rulers in that church, as if in some strange way they constituted its personal identity. Why should a clergy-

man of the present day feel interested in the defence of Laud or Sheldon? Surely it is sufficient for the warmest partizan of our establishment, that he can assert with truth,—when our Church persecuted, it was on mistaken principles held in common by all Christendom; and at all events, far less culpable was this intolerance in the Bishops, who were maintaining the existing laws, than the persecuting spirit afterwards shown by their successful opponents, who had no such excuse, and who should have been taught mercy by their own sufferings, and wisdom by the utter failure of the experiment in their own case. We can say, that our Church, apostolical in its faith, primitive in its ceremonies, unequalled in its liturgical forms; that our Church, which has kindled and displayed more bright and burning lights of genius and learning than all other protestant churches since the reformation, was (with the single exception of the times of Laud and Sheldon) least intolerant, when all Christians unhappily deemed a species of intolerance their religious duty; that Bishops of our church were among the first that contended against this error; and finally, that since the reformation, when tolerance became a fashion, the Church of England, in a tolerating age, has shown herself eminently tolerant, and far more so, both in spirit and in fact, than many of her most bitter opponents, who profess to deem toleration itself an insult on the rights of mankind! As to myself, who not only know the Church-Establishment to be tolerant, but who see in it the greatest, if not the sole safe bulwark of toleration, I feel no necessity of defending or palliating oppressions under the two Charleses, in order to exclaim with a full and fervent heart, Esto perpetua!

FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER.

A WAR-ECLOGUE.

The Scene, a desolated Tract in la Vendée. FAMINE *is discovered lying on the ground; to her enter* FIRE *and* SLAUGHTER.

FAMINE.

SISTERS! sisters! who sent you here?

SLAUGHTER (*to Fire.*)

I will whisper it in her ear.

FIRE.

No! no! no!
Spirits hear what spirits tell:
'Twill make a holiday in Hell.
No! no! no!
Myself, I named him once below,
And all the souls, that damned be,
Leaped up at once in anarchy,
Clapped their hands and danced for glee.
They no longer heeded me;
But laughed to hear Hell's burning rafters
Unwillingly re-echo laughters!
No! no! no!
Spirits hear what spirits tell:
'Twill make a holiday in Hell!

FAMINE.

Whisper it, sister! so and so!
In a dark hint, soft and slow.

SLAUGHTER.

Letters four do form his name—
And who sent you?

Both.

The same! the same!

SLAUGHTER.

He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,
And I have drunk the blood since then
Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

Both.

Who bade you do it?

SLAUGHTER.

The same! the same!
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried, Halloo!
To him alone the praise is due.

FAMINE.

Thanks, sisters, thanks! the men have bled,
Their wives and their children faint for bread.
I stood in a swampy field of battle;
With bones and skulls I made a rattle,
To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow

And the homeless dog—but they would not go.
So off I flew: for how could I bear
To see them gorge their dainty fare?
I heard a groan and a peevish squall,
And through the chink of a cottage-wall—
Can you guess what I saw there?

Both.

Whisper it, sister! in our ear.

FAMINE.

A baby beat its dying mother:
I had starved the one and was starving the other!

Both.

Who bade you do it?

FAMINE.

The same! the same!
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried, Halloo!
To him alone the praise is due.

FIRE.

Sisters! I from Ireland came!
Hedge and corn-fields all on flame,
I triumphed o'er the setting sun!
And all the while the work was done,
On as I strode with my huge strides,
I flung back my head and I held my sides,
It was so rare a piece of fun
To see the sweltered cattle run

With uncouth gallop through the night,
Scared by the red and noisy light!
By the light of his own blazing cot
Was many a naked rebel shot:
The house-stream met the flame and hissed,
While crash! fell in the roof, I wist,
On some of those old bed-rid nurses,
That deal in discontent and curses.

Both.

Who bade you do it?

FIRE.

The same! the same!
Letters four do form his name.
He let me loose, and cried, Halloo!
To him alone the praise is due.

All.

He let us loose, and cried, Halloo!
How shall we yield him honour due?

FAMINE.

Wisdom comes with lack of food.
I'll gnaw, I'll gnaw the multitude,
Till the cup of rage o'erbrim:
They shall seize him and his brood—

SLAUGHTER.

They shall tear him limb from limb!

FIRE.

O thankless beldames and untrue!
And is this all that you can do
For him, who did so much for you?
Ninety months he, by my troth!
Hath richly catered for you both;
And in an hour would you repay
An eight years' work?—Away! away!
I alone am faithful! I
Cling to him everlastingly.

1796.

II. LOVE POEMS.

"Quas humilis tenero stylus olim effudit in ævo.
Perlegis hic lacrymas, et quod pharetratus acutâ
Ille puer puero fecit mihi cuspide vulnus.
Omnia paulatim consumit longior ætas,
Vivendoque simul morimur, rapimurque manendo.
Ipse mihi collatus enim non ille videbor:
Frons alia est, moresque alii, nova mentis imago,
Voxque aliud sonat—
Pectore nunc gelido calidos miseremur amantes,
Jamque arsisse pudet. Veteres tranquilla tumultus
Mens horret, relegensque alium putat ista locutum."

PETRARCH.

LOVE.

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined; and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land;—

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music, and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes, long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stept aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin-pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

LEWTI,

OR THE CIRCASSIAN LOVE-CHANT.

AT midnight by the stream I roved,
To forget the form I loved.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

The moon was high, the moonlight gleam
And the shadow of a star
Heaved upon Tamaha's stream;
But the rock shone brighter far,
The rock half sheltered from my view
By pendent boughs of tressy yew.—
So shines my Lewti's forehead fair,
Gleaming through her sable hair.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
Onward to the moon it passed.
Still brighter and more bright it grew.
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reached the moon at last;
Then the cloud was wholly bright,
With a rich and amber light!
And so with many a hope I seek,
And with such joy I find my Lewti;
And even so my pale wan cheek
Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty!
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind,
If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud—it floats away,
 Away it goes; away so soon?
Alas! it has no power to stay:
Its hues are dim, its hues are grey—
 Away it passes from the moon!
How mournfully it seems to fly,
 Ever fading more and more,
To joyless regions of the sky—
 And now 'tis whiter than before!
As white as my poor cheek will be,
 When, Lewti! on my couch I lie,
A dying man for love of thee.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—
And yet, thou did'st not look unkind.

 I saw a vapour in the sky,
 Thin, and white, and very high:
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud.
 Perhaps the breezes that can fly
 Now below and now above,
Have snatched aloft the lawny shroud
 Of Lady fair—that died for love.
For maids, as well as youths, have perished
From fruitless love too fondly cherished.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush! my heedless feet from under
 Slip the crumbling banks for ever:
Like echoes to a distant thunder,
 They plunge into the gentle river.
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.
O beauteous birds! methinks ye measure

Your movements to some heavenly tune!
O beauteous birds! 'tis such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon,
I would it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies,
When silent night has closed her eyes;
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
The nightingale sings o'er her head:
Voice of the night, had I the power
That leafy labyrinth to thread,
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
I then might view her bosom white
Heaving lovely to my sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently swelling wave.

Oh! that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care!
All pale and wasted I would seem,
Yet fair withal, as spirits are!
I'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave, and heave for me!
Soothe, gentle image! soothe my mind!
To-morrow Lewti may be kind.

From the Morning Post, 1795.

THE PICTURE,

OR THE LOVER'S RESOLUTION.

THROUGH weeds and thorns, and matted underwood
I force my way; now climb, and now descend
O'er rocks, or bare or mossy, with wild foot
Crushing the purple whorts; while oft unseen,
Hurrying along the drifted forest-leaves,
The scared snake rustles. Onward still I toil,
I know not, ask not whither! A new joy,
Lovely as light, sudden as summer gust,
And gladsome as the first-born of the spring,
Beckons me on, or follows from behind,
Playmate, or guide! The master-passion quelled,
I feel that I am free. With dun-red bark
The fir-trees, and the unfrequent slender oak,
Forth from this tangle wild of bush and brake
Soar up, and form a melancholy vault
High o'er me, murmuring like a distant sea.
Here Wisdom might resort, and here Remorse;
Here too the love-lorn man who, sick in soul
And of this busy human heart aweary,
Worships the spirit of unconscious life
In tree or wild-flower.—Gentle lunatic!
If so he might not wholly cease to be,
He would far rather not be that, he is;
But would be something, that he knows not of,
In winds or waters, or among the rocks!

But hence, fond wretch! breathe not contagion here!
No myrtle-walks are these: these are no groves
Where Love dare loiter! If in sullen mood
He should stray hither, the low stumps shall gore
His dainty feet, the briar and the thorn
Make his plumes haggard. Like a wounded bird
Easily caught, ensnare him, O ye Nymphs,
Ye Oreads chaste, ye dusky Dryades!
And you, ye Earth-winds! you that make at morn
The dew-drops quiver on the spiders' webs!
You, O ye wingless Airs! that creep between
The rigid stems of heath and bitten furze,
Within whose scanty shade, at summer-noon,
The mother-sheep hath worn a hollow bed—
Ye, that now cool her fleece with dropless damp,
Now pant and murmur with her feeding lamb.
Chase, chase him, all ye Fays, and elfin Gnomes!
With prickles sharper than his darts bemock
His little Godship, making him perforce
Creep through a thorn-bush on yon hedgehog's back.

This is my hour of triumph! I can now
With my own fancies play the merry fool,
And laugh away worse folly, being free.
Here will I seat myself, beside this old,
Hollow, and weedy oak, which ivy-twine
Clothes as with net-work: here will I couch my limbs,
Close by this river, in this silent shade,
As safe and sacred from the step of man
As an invisible world—unheard, unseen,
And listening only to the pebbly brook,
That murmurs with a dead, yet bell-like sound
Tinkling, or bees, that in the neighbouring trunk
Make honey-hoards. This breeze, that visits me,

Was never Love's accomplice, never raised
The tendril ringlets from the maiden's brow,
And the blue, delicate veins above her cheek;
Ne'er played the wanton—never half disclosed
The maiden's snowy bosom, scattering thence
Eye-poisons for some love-distempered youth,
Who ne'er henceforth may see an aspen-grove
Shiver in sunshine, but his feeble heart
Shall flow away like a dissolving thing.

Sweet breeze! thou only, if I guess aright,
Liftest the feathers of the robin's breast,
Who swells his little breast, so full of song,
Singing above me, on the mountain-ash.
And thou too, desert stream! no pool of thine,
Though clear as lake in latest summer-eve,
Did e'er reflect the stately virgin's robe,
Her face, her form divine, her downcast look
Contemplative! Ah see! her open palm
Presses her cheek and brow! her elbow rests
On the bare branch of half-uprooted tree,
That leans towards its mirror! He, meanwhile,
Who from her countenance turned, or looked by stealth,
(For fear is true love's cruel nurse,) he now,
With stedfast gaze and unoffending eye,
Worships the watery idol, dreaming hopes
Delicious to the soul, but fleeting, vain,
Even as that phantom-world on which he gazed,
She, sportive tyrant! with her left hand plucks
The heads of tall flowers that behind her grow,
Lychnis, and willow-herb, and fox-glove bells;
And suddenly, as one that toys with time,
Scatters them on the pool! Then all the charm

Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth, who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes!
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo! he stays:
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror; and behold
Each wildflower on the marge inverted there,
And there the half-uprooted tree—but where,
O where the virgin's snowy arm, that leaned
On its bare branch? He turns, and she is gone!
Homeward she steals through many a woodland maze
Which he shall seek in vain. Ill-fated youth!
Go, day by day, and waste thy manly prime
In mad love-yearning by the vacant brook,
Till sickly thoughts bewitch thine eyes, and thou
Behold'st her shadow still abiding there,
The Naiad of the mirror!

Not to thee,
O wild and desert stream! belongs this tale:
Gloomy and dark art thou—the crowded firs
Tower from thy shores, and stretch across thy bed,
Making thee doleful as a cavern-well:
Save when the shy king-fishers build their nest
On thy steep banks, no loves hast thou, wild stream!

This be my chosen haunt—emancipate
From passion's dreams, a freeman, and alone,
I rise and trace its devious course. O lead,
Lead me to deeper shades and lonelier glooms.
Lo! stealing through the canopy of firs

How fair the sunshine spots that mossy rock,
Isle of the river, whose disparted waters
Dart off asunder with an angry sound,
How soon to reunite! And see! they meet,
Each in the other lost and found: and see!
Placeless, as spirits, one soft water-sun
Throbbing within them, heart at once and eye!
With its soft neighbourhood of filmy clouds,
The stains and shadings of forgotten tears,
Dimness o'erswum with lustre!—Such the hour
Of deep enjoyment, following Love's brief feuds!
And hark, the noise of a near waterfall!
I come out into light—I find myself
Beneath a weeping birch (most beautiful
Of forest-trees, the lady of the woods),
Hard by the brink of a tall weedy rock
That overbrows the cataract. How bursts
The landscape on my sight! Two crescent hills
Fold in behind each other, and so make
A circular vale, and land-locked, as might seem,
With brook and bridge, and grey stone cottages,
Half hid by rocks and fruit-trees. At my feet,
The whortle-berries are bedewed with spray,
Dashed upwards by the furious waterfall.
How solemnly the pendent ivy-mass
Swings in its winnow! All the air is calm.
The smoke from cottage-chimnies, tinged with light,
Rises in columns: from this house alone,
Close by the waterfall, the column slants,
And feels its ceaseless breeze. But what is this?
That cottage, with its slanting chimney-smoke,
And close beside its porch a sleeping child,
His dear head pillowed on a sleeping dog—
One arm between its fore legs, and the hand

Holds loosely its small handful of wild-flowers,
Unfilleted, and of unequal lengths.
A curious picture, with a master's haste
Sketched on a strip of pinky-silver skin,
Peeled from the birchen-bark! Divinest maid!
Yon bark her canvas, and those purple berries
Her pencil! See, the juice is scarcely dried
On the fine skin! She has been newly here;
And lo! yon patch of heath has been her couch—
The pressure still remains! O blessed couch!
For this may'st thou flower early, and the sun,
Slanting at eve, rest bright, and linger long
Upon thy purple bells! O Isabel!
Daughter of genius! stateliest of our maids!
More beautiful than whom Alcæus wooed
The Lesbian woman of immortal song!
O child of genius! stately, beautiful,
And full of love to all, save only me,
And not ungentle e'en to me! My heart,
Why beats it thus? Through yonder coppice-wood
Needs must the pathway turn, that leads straightway
On to her father's house. She is alone!
The night draws on—such ways are hard to hit—
And fit it is I should restore this sketch,
Dropt unawares no doubt. Why should I yearn
To keep the relique? 'twill but idly feed
The passion that consumes me. Let me haste!
The picture in my hand which she has left;
She cannot blame me that I followed her:
And I may be her guide the long wood through.

THE NIGHT-SCENE.

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

SANDOVAL.

OU loved the daughter of Don Manrique?

EARL HENRY.

Loved?

SANDOVAL.

Did you not say you wooed her?

EARL HENRY.

Once I loved
Her whom I dared not woo!

SANDOVAL.

And wooed, perchance,
One whom you loved not!

EARL HENRY.

Oh! I were most base,
Not loving Oropeza. True, I wooed her,
Hoping to heal a deeper wound; but she
Met my advances with impassioned pride,
That kindled love with love. And when her sire,
Who in his dream of hope already grasped
The golden circlet in his hand, rejected
My suit with insult, and in memory
Of ancient feuds, poured curses on my head,

Her blessings overtook and baffled them!
But thou art stern, and with unkindly countenance
Art inly reasoning whilst thou listenest to me.

SANDOVAL.

Anxiously, Henry! reasoning anxiously.
But Oropeza—

EARL HENRY.

Blessings gather round her!
Within this wood there winds a secret passage,
Beneath the walls, which opens out at length
Into the gloomiest covert of the garden—
The night ere my departure to the army,
She, nothing trembling, led me through that gloom,
And to that covert by a silent stream,
Which, with one star reflected near its marge,
Was the sole object visible around me.
No leaflet stirred; the air was almost sultry;
So deep, so dark, so close the umbrage o'er us!
No leaflet stirred;—yet pleasure hung upon
The gloom and stillness of the balmy night-air.
A little further on an arbour stood,
Fragrant with flowering trees—I well remember
What an uncertain glimmer in the darkness
Their snow-white blossoms made—thither she led
me,
To that sweet bower—Then Oropeza trembled—
I heard her heart beat—if 'twere not my own.

SANDOVAL.

A rude and searing note, my friend!

EARL HENRY.

Oh! no!
I have small memory of aught but pleasure.
The inquietudes of fear, like lesser streams
Still flowing, still were lost in those of love:
So love grew mightier from the fear, and Nature,
Fleeing from pain, sheltered herself in joy.
The stars above our heads were dim and steady,
Like eyes suffused with rapture. Life was in us:
We were all life, each atom of our frames
A living soul—I vowed to die for her:
With the faint voice of one who, having spoken,
Relapses into blessedness, I vowed it:
That solemn vow, a whisper scarcely heard,
A murmur breathed against a lady's ear.
Oh! there is joy above the name of pleasure,
Deep self-possession, an intense repose.

SANDOVAL (*with a sarcastic smile*).

No other than as eastern sages paint,
The God, who floats upon a lotos leaf,
Dreams for a thousand ages; then awaking,
Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble,
Relapses into bliss.

EARL HENRY.

Ah! was that bliss
Feared as an alien, and too vast for man?
For suddenly, impatient of its silence,
Did Oropeza, starting, grasp my forehead.
I caught her arms; the veins were swelling on them.
Through the dark bower she sent a hollow voice,
"Oh! what if all betray me? what if thou?"

I swore, and with an inward thought that seemed
The purpose and the substance of my being,
I swore to her, that were she red with guilt,
I would exchange my unblenched state with hers.—
Friend! by that winding passage, to that bower
I now will go—all objects there will teach me
Unwavering love, and singleness of heart.
Go, Sandoval! I am prepared to meet her—
Say nothing of me—I myself will seek her—
Nay, leave me, friend! I cannot bear the torment
And keen inquiry of that scanning eye.—

[EARL HENRY *retires into the wood.*

SANDOVAL (*alone*).

O Henry! always striv'st thou to be great
By thine own act—yet art thou never great
But by the inspiration of great passion.
The whirl-blast comes, the desert-sands rise up
And shape themselves: from earth to heaven they stand,
As though they were the pillars of a temple,
Built by Omnipotence in its own honour!
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit
Is fled: the mighty columns were but sand,
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins!

THE FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE.

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

I NEVER saw the man whom you describe.

MARIA.

'Tis strange, he spake of you familiarly,
As mine and Albert's common Foster-Mother.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

Now blessings on the man, whoe'er he be,
That joined your names with mine! O my sweet lady!
As often as I think of those dear times,
When you two little ones would stand at eve
On each side of my chair, and make me learn
All you had learnt in the day, and how to talk
In gentle phrase, then bid me sing to you—
'Tis more like heaven to come than what has been.

MARIA.

O my dear Mother! this strange man has left me
Troubled with wilder fancies, than the moon
Breeds in the love-sick maid who gazes at it,
Till lost in inward vision, with wet eye
She gazes idly.—But that entrance, Mother!—

FOSTER-MOTHER.

Can no one hear. It is a perilous tale!

MARIA.

No one!

FOSTER-MOTHER.

My husband's father told it me,
Poor old Leoni: Angels, rest his soul!
He was a woodman, and could fell, and saw,
With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
Which props the hanging-wall of the old chapel?—
Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree,
He found a baby, wrapt in mosses lined
With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
And reared him at the then Lord Valez' cost;
And so the babe grew up a pretty boy—
A pretty boy, but most unteachable—
And never learnt a prayer nor told a bead;
But knew the names of birds, and mocked their notes,
And whistled, as he were a bird himself!
And all the autumn 'twas his only play
To gather seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them
With earth and water on the stumps of trees.
A Friar, who oft culled simples in the wood,
A grey-haired man—he loved this little boy:
The boy loved him—and, when the Friar taught him,
He soon could write with the pen; and from that time
Lived chiefly at the convent or the castle.
So he became a very learned youth.
But ho! poor wretch! he read, and read, and read,
Till his brain turned—and ere his twentieth year,
He had unlawful thoughts of many things:
And though he prayed, he never loved to pray
With holy men, or in a holy place;—

But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
The late Lord Valez ne'er was wearied with him:
And once, as by the north side of the chapel
They stood together, chained in deep discourse,
The earth heaved under them with such a groan,
That the wall tottered, and had well nigh fallen
Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frightened;
A fever seized him, and he made confession
Of all the heretical and lawless talk [seized
Which brought this judgment. So the youth was
And cast into that hole. My husband's father
Sobbed like a child—it almost broke his heart;
And once, as he was working in the cellar,
He heard a voice distinctly; 'twas the youth's,
Who sung a doleful song about green fields,
How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah
To hunt for food, and be a naked man,
And wander up and down at liberty.
He always doted on the youth, and now
His love grew desperate; and defying death,
He made that cunning entrance I described;
And the young man escaped.

MARIA.

'Tis a sweet tale:
Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
His rosy face besoiled with unwiped tears.—
And what became of him?

FOSTER-MOTHER.

He went on ship-board,
With those bold voyagers who made discovery
Of golden lands. Leoni's youngest brother

Went likewise; and when he returned to Spain,
He told Leoni, that the poor mad youth,
Soon after they arrived in that new world,
In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
And, all alone, set sail by silent moonlight
Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more; but 'tis supposed,
He lived and died among the savage men.

TO AN UNFORTUNATE WOMAN,

WHOM THE AUTHOR HAD KNOWN IN THE DAYS OF HER INNOCENCE.

MYRTLE-LEAF that, ill besped,
Pinest in the gladsome ray,
Soiled beneath the common tread,
Far from thy protecting spray!

When the partridge o'er the sheaf
Whirred along the yellow vale,
Sad I saw thee, heedless leaf!
Love the dalliance of the gale.

Lightly didst thou, foolish thing!
Heave and flutter to his sighs,
While the flatterer, on his wing,
Wooed and whispered thee to rise.

Gaily from thy mother-stalk
Wert thou danced and wafted high—
Soon on this unsheltered walk
Flung to fade, to rot and die.

TO AN UNFORTUNATE WOMAN

AT THE THEATRE.



AIDEN, that with sullen brow
Sitt'st behind those virgins gay,
Like a scorched and mildewed bough,
Leafless 'mid the blooms of May!

Him who lured thee and forsook,
Oft I watched with angry gaze,
Fearful saw his pleading look,
Anxious heard his fervid phrase.

Soft the glances of the youth,
Soft his speech, and soft his sigh;
But no sound like simple truth,
But no true love in his eye.

Loathing thy polluted lot,
Hie thee, Maiden, hie thee hence!
Seek thy weeping Mother's cot,
With a wiser innocence.

Thou hast known deceit and folly,
Thou hast felt that vice is woe:
With a musing melancholy
Inly armed, go, Maiden! go.

Mother sage of self-dominion,
Firm thy steps, O Melancholy!

The strongest plume in wisdom's pinion
Is the memory of past folly.

Mute the sky-lark and forlorn,
While she moults the firstling plumes,
That had skimmed the tender corn,
Or the bean-field's odorous blooms.

Soon with renovated wing
Shall she dare a loftier flight,
Upward to the day-star spring
And embathe in heavenly light.

LINES COMPOSED IN A CONCERT-ROOM.



OR cold, nor stern, my soul! yet I detest
These scented rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
Heaves the proud harlot her distended breast,
In intricacies of laborious song.

These feel not Music's genuine power, nor deign
To melt at Nature's passion-warbled plaint;
But when the long-breathed singer's uptrilled strain
Bursts in a squall—they gape for wonderment.

Hark! the deep buzz of vanity and hate!
Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer
My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,
While the pert captain, or the primmer priest,
Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.

O give me, from this heartless scene released,
To hear our old musician, blind and grey,
(Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kissed,)
His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,
By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,
The while I dance amid the tedded hay
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay
Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide
Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees
Around whose roots the fisher's boat is tied,
On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,
And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,
Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,
That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne! when midnight wind careers,
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed
Makes the cock shrilly in the rainstorm crow,
To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
Ballad of ship-wrecked sailor floating dead,
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!
Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice remeasures
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
The things of Nature utter; birds or trees
Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
Or where the stiff grass 'mid the heath-plant waves,
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

THE KEEP-SAKE.

THE tedded hay, the first-fruits of the soil,
The tedded hay and corn-sheaves in one field, [glove tall
Show summer gone, ere come. The fox-
Sheds its loose purple bells, or in the gust,
Or when it bends beneath the up-springing lark,
Or mountain-finch alighting. And the rose
(In vain the darling of successful love)
Stands, like some boasted beauty of past years,
The thorns remaining, and the flowers all gone.
Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk
By rivulet, or spring, or wet road-side,
That blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,
Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not!*
So will not fade the flowers which Emmeline
With delicate fingers on the snow-white silk
Has worked, (the flowers which most she knew I loved,)
And, more beloved than they, her auburn hair.
In the cool morning twilight, early waked
By her full bosom's joyless restlessness,
Leaving the soft bed to her sleeping sister,
Softly she rose, and lightly stole along,

* One of the names (and meriting to be the only one) of the *Myosotis Scorpioides Palustris;* a flower from six to twelve inches high, with blue blossom and bright yellow eye. It has the same name over the whole Empire of Germany (*Vergissmein nicht*), and we believe, in Denmark and Sweden.

Down the slope coppice to the woodbine bower,
Whose rich flowers, swinging in the morning breeze,
Over their dim fast-moving shadows hung,
Making a quiet image of disquiet
In the smooth, scarcely moving river-pool.
There, in that bower where first she owned her love,
And let me kiss my own warm tear of joy
From off her glowing cheek, she sate and stretched
The silk upon the frame, and worked her name
Between the Moss-Rose and Forget-me-not—
Her own dear name, with her own auburn hair!
That forced to wander till sweet spring return,
I yet might ne'er forget her smile, her look,
Her voice, (that even in her mirthful mood
Has made me wish to steal away and weep,)
Nor yet the entrancement of that maiden kiss
With which she promised, that when spring returned,
She would resign one half of that dear name,
And own thenceforth no other name but mine!

TO A LADY.

WITH FALCONER'S "SHIPWRECK."

AH! not by Cam or Isis, famous streams,
In arched groves, the youthful poet's choice;
Nor while half-listening, 'mid delicious dreams,
To harp and song from lady's hand and voice;

Nor yet while gazing in sublimer mood
On cliff, or cataract, in Alpine dell;

Nor in dim cave with bladdery sea-weed strewed,
Framing wild fancies to the ocean's swell;

Our sea-bard sang this song! which still he sings,
And sings for thee, sweet friend! Hark, Pity, hark!
Now mounts, now totters on the tempest's wings,
Now groans, and shivers, the replunging bark!

"Cling to the shrouds!" In vain! The breakers roar—
Death shrieks! With two alone of all his clan,
Forlorn the poet paced the Grecian shore,
No classic roamer, but a ship-wrecked man!

Say then, what muse inspired these genial strains,
And lit his spirit to so bright a flame?
The elevating thought of suffered pains,
Which gentle hearts shall mourn; but chief, the name

Of gratitude! remembrances of friend,
Or absent or no more! shades of the Past,
Which Love makes substance! Hence to thee I send,
O dear as long as life and memory last!

I send with deep regards of heart and head,
Sweet maid, for friendship formed! this work to thee:
And thou, the while thou canst not choose but shed
A tear for Falconer, wilt remember me!

TO A YOUNG LADY.

ON HER RECOVERY FROM A FEVER.



HY need I say, Louisa dear!
How glad I am to see you here,
A lovely convalescent;
Risen from the bed of pain, and fear,
And feverish heat incessant.

The sunny showers, the dappled sky,
The little birds that warble high,
Their vernal loves commencing,
Will better welcome you than I,
With their sweet influencing.

Believe me, while in bed you lay,
Your danger taught us all to pray:
You made us grow devouter!
Each eye looked up and seemed to say,
How can we do without her?

Besides, what vexed us worse, we knew,
They have no need of such as you
In the place where you were going:
This World has angels all too few,
And Heaven is overflowing!

SOMETHING CHILDISH, BUT VERY NATURAL.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY.



F I had but two little wings,
And were a little feathery bird,
To you I'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things,
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:
I'm always with you in my sleep;
The world is all one's own.
But then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids:
So I love to wake ere break of day:
For though my sleep be gone,
Yet, while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,
And still dreams on.

HOME-SICK.

WRITTEN IN GERMANY.



IS sweet to him, who all the week
Through city crowds must push his way,
To stroll alone through fields and woods,
And hallow thus the Sabbath-day.

And sweet it is, in summer bower,
Sincere, affectionate and gay,
One's own dear children feasting round,
To celebrate one's marriage-day.

But what is all, to his delight,
Who having long been doomed to roam,
Throws off the bundle from his back,
Before the door of his own home?

Home-sickness is a wasting pang;
This feel I hourly more and more:
There's healing only in thy wings,
Thou breeze that play'st on Albion's shore!

ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION.



O you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linnet and thrush say, "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving—all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he—
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me!"

THE VISIONARY HOPE.

SAD lot, to have no Hope! Though lowly kneeling,
He fain would frame a prayer within his breast,
Would fain intreat for some sweet breath of healing,
That his sick body might have ease and rest;
He strove in vain! the dull sighs from his chest
Against his will the stifling load revealing.
Though Nature forced; though like some captive guest,
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,
The sternness on his gentle brow confessed
Sickness within and miserable feeling:
Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,
Each night was scattered by its own loud screams:
Yet never could his heart command, though fain,
One deep full wish to be no more in pain.

That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast,
Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,
Though changed in nature, wander where he would—
For Love's despair is but Hope's pining ghost!
For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,
He wishes and can wish for this alone!
Pierced, as with light from Heaven, before its gleams
(So the love-stricken visionary deems)

Disease would vanish, like a summer-shower,
Whose dews fling sunshine from the noontide bower!
Or let it stay! yet this one Hope should give
Such strength that he would bless his pains and live.

THE HAPPY HUSBAND.

A FRAGMENT.



FT, oft methinks, the while with Thee
I breathe, as from my heart, thy dear
And dedicated name, I hear
A promise and a mystery,
A pledge of more than passing life,
Yea, in that very name of Wife!

A pulse of love, that ne'er can sleep!
A feeling that upbraids the heart
With happiness beyond desert,
That gladdens half requests to weep!
Nor bless I not the keener sense
And unalarming turbulence

Of transient joys, that ask no sting
From jealous fears, or coy denying;
But born beneath Love's brooding wing,
And into tenderness soon dying,
Wheel out their giddy moment, then
Resign the soul to love again.

A more precipitated vein
Of notes, that eddy in the flow

Of smoothest song, they come, they go,
And leave their sweeter understrain
Its own sweet self—a love of Thee
That seems, yet cannot greater be!

RECOLLECTIONS OF LOVE.

I.

OW warm this woodland wild recess!
Love surely hath been breathing here;
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear!
Swells up, then sinks with faint caress,
As if to have you yet more near.

II.

Eight springs have flown, since last I lay
On seaward Quantock's heathy hills,
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills
Float here and there, like things astray,
And high o'er head the sky-lark shrills.

III.

No voice as yet had made the air
Be music with your name: yet why
That asking look? That yearning sigh?
That sense of promise everywhere?
Beloved! flew your spirit by?

IV.

As when a mother doth explore
The rose-mark on her long lost child,
I met, I loved you, maiden mild!

As whom I long had loved before—
So deeply had I been beguiled.

V.

You stood before me like a thought,
A dream remembered in a dream.
But when those meek eyes first did seem
To tell me, Love within you wrought—
O Greta, dear domestic stream!

VI.

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep,
Has not Love's whisper evermore,
Been ceaseless, as thy gentle roar?
Sole voice, when other voices sleep,
Dear under-song in clamour's hour.

ON RE-VISITING THE SEA-SHORE AFTER LONG ABSENCE,

UNDER STRONG MEDICAL RECOMMENDATION NOT TO BATHE.

GOD be with thee, gladsome Ocean!
How gladly greet I thee once more!
Ships and waves, and ceaseless motion,
And men rejoicing on thy shore.

Dissuading spake the mild physician,
"Those briny waves for thee are death!"
But my soul fulfilled her mission,
And lo! I breathe untroubled breath!

Fashion's pining sons and daughters,
 That seek the crowd they seem to fly,
Trembling, they approach thy waters;
 And what cares Nature, if they die?

Me a thousand hopes and pleasures,
 A thousand recollections bland,
Thoughts sublime, and stately measures,
 Revisit on thy echoing strand:

Dreams, (the soul herself forsaking,)
 Tearful raptures, boyish mirth;
Silent adorations, making
 A blessed shadow of this Earth!

O ye hopes, that stir within me,
 Health comes with you from above!
God is with me, God is in me!
 I cannot die, if Life be Love.

III. MEDITATIVE POEMS

IN BLANK VERSE.

"Yea, he deserves to find himself deceived,
Who seeks a Heart in the unthinking Man.
Like shadows on a stream, the forms of life
Impress their characters on the smooth forehead:
Nought sinks into the bosom's silent depth.
Quick sensibility of pain and pleasure
Moves the light fluids lightly; but no Soul
Warmeth the inner frame."—SCHILLER.

HYMN BEFORE SUNRISE,

IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

Besides the rivers, Arve and Arveiron, which have their sources in the foot of Mont Blanc, five conspicuous torrents rush down its sides; and within a few paces of the Glaciers, the Gentiana Major grows in immense numbers, with its "flowers of loveliest blue."

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran BLANC!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form!
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above

Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,
Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstacy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my Heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovran of the Vale!
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald! wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks
For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty Voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nation
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,
Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast—
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow-travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the earth!
Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from earth to heaven,
Great hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM AT ELBINGERODE, IN THE HARTZ FOREST.

I STOOD on Brocken's* sovran height, and saw
Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills,
A surging scene, and only limited
By the blue distance. Heavily my way
Downward I dragged through fir groves evermore,
Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms

* The highest mountain in the Hartz, and indeed in North Germany.

Speckled with sunshine; and, but seldom heard,
The sweet bird's song became an hollow sound;
And the breeze, murmuring indivisibly,
Preserved its solemn murmur most distinct
From many a note of many a waterfall,
And the brook's chatter; 'mid whose islet stones
The dingy kidling with its tinkling bell
Leaped frolicsome, or old romantic goat
Sate, his white beard slow waving. I moved on
In low and languid mood: for I had found
That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
Their finer influence from the life within:
Fair ciphers of vague import, where the eye
Traces no spot, in which the Heart may read
History or prophecy of friend, or child,
Or gentle maid, our first and early love,
Or father, or the venerable name
Of our adored country! O thou Queen,
Thou delegated deity of earth,
O dear, dear England! how my longing eye
Turned westward, shaping in the steady clouds
Thy sands and high white cliffs!
My native land!
Filled with the thought of thee this heart was proud,
Yea, mine eye swam with tears: that all the view
From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,
Floated away, like a departing dream,
Feeble and dim! Stranger, these impulses

* " When I have gazed
From some high eminence on goodly vales,
And cots and villages embowered below,
The thought would rise that all to me was strange
Amid the scenes so fair, nor one small spot
Where my tired mind might rest, and call it home."
SOUTHEY'S *Hymn to the Penates.*

Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,
With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,
That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
That God is everywhere! the God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father, and the World our Home.

ON OBSERVING A BLOSSOM

ON THE 1ST OF FEBRUARY, 1796.

SWEET Flower! that peeping from thy russet stem
Unfoldest timidly, (for in strange sort
This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering Month
Hath borrowed Zephyr's voice, and gazed upon thee
With blue voluptuous eye) alas, poor Flower!
These are but flatteries of the faithless year.
Perchance, escaped its unknown polar cave,
E'en now the keen North-East is on its way.
Flower that must perish! shall I liken thee
To some sweet girl of too too rapid growth
Nipped by consumption, 'mid untimely charms?
Or to Bristowa's Bard* the wondrous boy!
An amaranth, which earth scarce seemed to own,
Blooming, mid poverty's drear wintry waste,
Till disappointment came, and pelting wrong
Beat it to earth? or with indignant grief
Shall I compare thee to poor Poland's hope,
Bright flower of hope killed in the opening bud?

* Chatterton.

Farewell, sweet blossom! better fate be thine
And mock my boding! Dim similitudes
Weaving in mortal strains, I've stolen one hour
From anxious self, Life's cruel task-master!
And the warm wooings of this sunny day
Tremble along my frame and harmonize
The attempered organ, that even saddest thoughts
Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes
Played deftly on a soft-toned instrument.

THE EOLIAN HARP.

COMPOSED AT CLEVEDON, SOMERSETSHIRE.



Y pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
With white-flowered jasmin, and the broad-leaved myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Snatched from yon bean-field! and the world so hushed!
The stilly murmur of the distant sea
Tells us of silence. And that simplest lute,
Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark!
How by the desultory breeze caressed,

Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing!
O! the one life, within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion, and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere.
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so filled,
Where the breeze warbles and the mute still air,
Is Music slumbering on her instrument!
And thus, my love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst through my half-closed eye-lids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject lute!
And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversly framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject,
And bidd'st me walk humbly with my God.
Meek daughter in the family of Christ!
Well hast thou said and holily dispraised
These shapings of the unregenerate mind,
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of Him,
The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
I praise Him, and with faith that inly feels;
Who with His saving mercies healed me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wildered and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this cot, and thee, heart-honoured Maid!

REFLECTIONS

ON HAVING LEFT A PLACE OF RETIREMENT.

"Sermoni propiora."—Hor.

OW was our pretty cot: our tallest rose
Peeped at the chamber-window. We could hear
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
Our myrtles blossomed; and across the porch
Thick jasmins twined: the little landscape round
Was green and woody, and refreshed the eye.
It was a spot which you might aptly call

The Valley of Seclusion! Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calmed
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings; for he paused, and looked
With a pleased sadness, and gazed all around,
Then eyed our Cottage, and gazed round again,
And sighed, and said, it was a Blessed Place.
And we *were* blessed. Oft with patient ear
Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wings) in whispered tones
I've said to my beloved, "Such, sweet girl!
The inobtrusive song of happiness,
Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
When the soul seeks to hear; when all is hushed,
And the heart listens!"

But the time, when first
From that low dell, steep up the stony mount
I climbed with perilous toil and reached the top,
Oh! what a goodly scene! Here the bleak mount,
The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
And river, now with bushy rocks o'erbrowed,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
And seats, and lawns, the Abbey, and the wood,
And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire:
The channel there, the islands and white sails,
Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean—
It seemed like Omnipresence! God, methought,
Had built Him there a temple: the whole world
Seemed imaged in its vast circumference,

No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury,—to be!

Ah! quiet dell! dear cot! and mount sublime!
I was constrained to quit you. Was it right,
While my unnumbered brethren toiled and bled,
That I should dream away the entrusted hours
On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use?
Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth:
And he, that works me good with unmoved face,
Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,
My benefactor, not my brother man!
Yet even this, this cold beneficence,
Praise, praise it, O my soul! oft as thou scann'st
The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!
Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,
Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies!
I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of science, freedom, and the truth in Christ.

Yet oft when after honourable toil
Rests the tired mind, and waking loves to dream,
My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot!
Thy jasmin and thy window-peeping rose,
And myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
And I shall sigh fond wishes—sweet abode!
Ah!—had none greater! And that all had such!
It might be so—but the time is not yet.
Speed it, O Father! Let Thy kingdom come!

TO THE REV. GEORGE COLERIDGE,

OF OTTERY ST. MARY, DEVON

WITH SOME POEMS.

"Natus in fratres mihi paterni."
Hor. *Carm.* lib. i. 2



BLESSED lot hath he, who having passed
His youth and early manhood in the stir
And turmoil of the world, retreats at length,
With cares that move, not agitate the heart,
To the same dwelling where his father dwelt;
And haply views his tottering little ones
Embrace those aged knees and climb that lap,
On which first kneeling his own infancy
Lisped its brief prayer. Such, O my earliest Friend!
Thy lot, and such thy brothers too enjoy.
At distance did ye climb life's upland road,
Yet cheered and cheering: now fraternal love
Hath drawn you to one centre. Be your days
Holy, and blest and blessing may ye live!

To me the Eternal Wisdom hath dispensed
A different fortune and more different mind—
Me from the spot where first I sprang to light,
Too soon transplanted, ere my soul had fixed
Its first domestic loves; and hence through life
Chasing chance-started friendships. A brief while
Some have preserved me from life's pelting ills;

But, like a tree with leaves of feeble stem,
If the clouds lasted, and a sudden breeze
Ruffled the boughs, they on my head at once
Dropped the collected shower; and some most false,
False and fair foliaged as the Manchineel,
Have tempted me to slumber in their shade
E'en mid the storm; then breathing subtlest damps,
Mixed their own venom with the rain from Heaven,
That I woke poisoned! But, all praise to Him
Who gives us all things, more have yielded me
Permanent shelter; and beside one friend,
Beneath the impervious covert of one oak,
I've raised a lowly shed, and know the names
Of husband and of father; not unhearing
Of that divine and nightly-whispering voice,
Which from my childhood to maturer years
Spake to me of predestinated wreaths,
Bright with no fading colours!

Yet at times
My soul is sad, that I have roamed through life
Still most a Stranger, most with naked heart
At mine own home and birth-place: chiefly then,
When I remember thee, my earliest Friend!
Thee, who didst watch my boy-hood and my youth;
Didst trace my wanderings with a father's eye;
And boding evil yet still hoping good
Rebuked each fault, and over all my woes
Sorrowed in silence! He who counts alone
The beatings of the solitary heart,
That Being knows, how I have loved thee ever,
Loved as a brother, as a son revered thee!
Oh! 'tis to me an ever new delight
To talk of thee and thine; or when the blast

Of the shrill winter, rattling our rude sash,
Endears the cleanly hearth and social bowl;
Or when as now, on some delicious eve,
We in our sweet sequestered orchard-plot
Sit on the tree crooked earth-ward; whose old boughs,
That hang above us in an arborous roof,
Stirred by the faint gale of departing May,
Send their loose blossoms slanting o'er our heads!

Nor dost not thou sometimes recall those hours,
When with the joy of hope thou gav'st thine ear
To my wild firstling-lays. Since then my song
Hath sounded deeper notes, such as beseem
Or that sad wisdom folly leaves behind,
Or such as, tuned to these tumultuous times,
Cope with the tempest's swell!

These various strains,
Which I have framed in many a various mood,
Accept, my brother! and (for some perchance
Will strike discordant on thy milder mind)
If aught of error or intemperate truth
Should meet thine ear, think thou that riper age
Will calm it down, and let thy love forgive it!

INSCRIPTION

FOR A FOUNTAIN ON A HEATH.

THIS Sycamore, oft musical with bees,—
Such tents the Patriarchs loved! O long unharmed
May all its aged boughs o'er-canopy
The small round basin, which this jutting stone

Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the Spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller
With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a Fairy's page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the fount.
Here twilight is and coolness: here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou may'st toil far and find no second tree.
Drink, Pilgrim, here! Here rest! and if thy heart
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh
Thy Spirit, listening to some gentle sound,
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees!

A TOMBLESS EPITAPH.



IS true, Idolochastes Satyrane!
(So call him, for so mingling blame with praise
And smiles with anxious looks, his earliest friends,
Masking his birth-name, wont to character
His wild-wood fancy and impetuous zeal,)
'Tis true that, passionate for ancient truths
And honouring with religious love the Great
Of elder times, he hated to excess,
With an unquiet and intolerant scorn,
The hollow puppets of a hollow age,
Ever idolatrous, and changing ever
Its worthless Idols! learning, power, and time,

(Too much of all) thus wasting in vain war
Of fervid colloquy. Sickness, 'tis true,
Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,
Even to the gates and inlets of his life!
But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,
And with a natural gladness, he maintained
The citadel unconquered, and in joy
Was strong to follow the delightful Muse.
For not a hidden path, that to the shades
Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads,
Lurked undiscovered by him; not a rill
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,
But he had traced it upward to its source,
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,
Knew the gay wild flowers on its banks, and culled
Its med'cinable herbs. Yea, oft alone,
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.
O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts!
O studious Poet, eloquent for truth!
Philosopher! contemning wealth and death,
Yet docile, childlike, full of Life and Love!
Here, rather than on monumental stone,
This record of thy worth thy Friend inscribes,
Thoughtful, with quiet tears upon his cheek.

THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the June of 1797, some long-expected Friends paid a visit to the author's cottage, and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower



ELL, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance, even when age
Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day Sun,
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;—that branchless ash,
Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fanned by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,*

* *Of long lank weeds.*] The *Asplenium Scolopendrium*, called in some countries the Adder's Tongue, in others the Hart's Tongue, but Withering gives the Adder's Tongue as the trivial name of the *Ophioglossum* only.

That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my Friends emerge
Beneath the wide wide Heaven – and view again
The many-steepled tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two isles
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hungered after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue ocean! So my Friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when He makes
Spirits perceive His presence.

A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked
Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watched

Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure,
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to love and beauty! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook
Beat its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it! deeming, its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had crossed the mighty orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st gazing; or when all was still,
Flew creaking* o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of life.

* *Flew creaking*] Some months after I had written this line, it gave me pleasure to observe that Bartram had observed the same circumstance of the Savanna Crane: "When these birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate and regular; and even when at a considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill-feathers, their shafts and webs upon one another creak as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea."

TO A FRIEND

WHO HAD DECLARED HIS INTENTION OF WRITING NO MORE POETRY.



EAR Charles! whilst yet thou wert a babe, I ween
That Genius plunged thee in that wizard fount
Hight Castalie; and (sureties of thy faith)
That Pity and Simplicity stood by,
And promised for thee, that thou shouldst renounce
The world's low cares and lying vanities,
Stedfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
And washed and sanctified to Poesy.
Yes—thou wert plunged, but with forgetful hand
Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior son:
And with those recreant unbaptized heels
Thou'rt flying from thy bounden ministeries—
So sore it seems and burthensome a task
To weave unwithering flowers! But take thou heed!
For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed Boy,
And I have arrows* mystically dipt,
Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead?
And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth
"Without the meed of one melodious tear?"
Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved bard,
Who to the "Illustrious† of his native Land
So properly did look for Patronage."

* Vide Pind. Olym. ii. l. 150.

† Verbatim from Burns's dedication of his Poem to the Nobility and Gentry of the Caledonian Hunt.

Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!
They snatched him from the sickle and the plough—
To gauge ale-firkins.

Oh! for shame return!
On a bleak rock, midway the Aonian mount,
There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
Whose aged branches to the midnight blast
Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough,
Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be exhaled,
And weeping wreath it round thy Poet's tomb.
Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
Pick the rank henbane and the dusky flowers
Of night-shade, or its red and tempting fruit.
These with stopped nostril and glove-guarded hand
Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine
The illustrious brow of Scotch Nobility.

1796

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

COMPOSED ON THE NIGHT AFTER HIS RECITATION OF A POEM ON THE GROWTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL MIND.

FRIEND of the wise! and teacher of the good!
Into my heart have I received that lay
More than historic, that prophetic lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit, thou hast dared to tell

What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings, like the secret soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words!—

Theme hard as high!
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth)
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner power; of moments awful,
Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestowed—
Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
Native or outland, lakes and famous hills!
Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars
Were rising; or by secret mountain-streams,
The guides and the companions of thy way!

Of more than fancy, of the social sense
Distending wide, and man beloved as man,
Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
Even as a bark becalmed beneath the burst
Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
Is visible, or shadow on the main.
For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
Amid a mighty nation jubilant,
When from the general heart of human kind

Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity!
—— Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and sure
From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute Self,
With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
Far on—herself a glory to behold,
The Angel of the vision! Then (last strain)
Of Duty, chosen laws controlling choice,
Action and joy!—An orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts,
To their own music chaunted!

O great Bard!
Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
Nor less a sacred roll, than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
Among the archives of mankind, thy work
Makes audible a linked lay of truth,
Of truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!
Ah! as I listened with a heart forlorn
The pulses of my being beat anew:
And even as life returns upon the drowned,
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains——
Keen pangs of love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of hope;
And hope that scarce would know itself from fear;

Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;
And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with thee had opened out—but flowers
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!

That way no more! and ill beseems it me,
Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,
Singing of glory, and futurity,
To wander back on such unhealthful road,
Plucking the poisons of self-harm! And ill
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths
Strewed before thy advancing!

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long!
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased: for peace is nigh
Where wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing!

Eve following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of home
Is sweetest! moments for their own sake hailed
And more desired, more precious for thy song,
In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven, as in surges now beneath the stars,

With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated foam,* still darting off
Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when—O Friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength!—
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces—
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound—
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

THE NIGHTINGALE;

A CONVERSATION POEM. WRITTEN IN APRIL, 1798.

NO cloud, no relic of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,

* "A beautiful white cloud of foam at momentary intervals coursed by the side of the vessel with a roar, and little stars of flame danced and sparkled and went out in it: and every now and then light detachments of this white cloud-like foam darted off from the vessel's side, each with its own small constellation, over the sea, and scoured out of sight like a Tartar troop over a wilde mere." THE FRIEND, p. 20

But hear no murmuring: it flows silently
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy"* bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
In nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man, whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain:
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,

* "*Most musical, most melancholy.*"] This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that of mere description. It is spoken in the character of the melancholy man, and has therefore a dramatic propriety. The author makes this remark, to rescue himself from the charge of having alluded with levity, to a line in Milton: a charge than which none could be more painful to him, except perhaps that of having ridiculed his Bible.

A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature! But 'twill not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music!

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not, and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many Nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's songs—
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
Stirring the air with such a harmony,

That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlit bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
With one sensation, and these wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if one quick and sudden gale had swept
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watched
Many a Nightingale perch giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again?
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,

Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
The evening-star, and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream)
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well!—
It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy! Once more farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! Once more, my friends! farewell.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

THE Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange

And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
To which the living spirit in our frame,
That loves not to behold a lifeless thing,
Transfuses its own pleasures, its own will.

How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.
Great universal Teacher! He shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall,
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.



THE THREE GRAVES.

A FRAGMENT OF A SEXTON'S TALE.

[The author has published the following humble fragment, encouraged by the decisive recommendation of more than one of our most celebrated living Poets. The language was intended to be dramatic, that is suited to the narrator; and the metre corresponds to the homeliness of the diction. It is therefore presented as the fragment, not of a Poem, but of a common Ballad-tale. Whether this is sufficient to justify the adoption of such a style, in any metrical composition not professedly ludicrous, the Author is himself in some doubt. At all events, it is not presented as Poetry, and it is in no way connected with the Author's Judgment concerning poetic diction. Its merits, if any, are exclusively psychological. The story which must have been supposed to have been narrated in the first and second parts is as follows.

Edward, a young farmer, meets at the house of Ellen, her bosom-friend Mary, and commences an acquaintance, which ends in a mutual attachment. With her consent, and by the advice of their common friend Ellen, he announces his hopes and intentions to Mary's mother, a widow-woman bordering on her fortieth year, and from constant health, the possession of a competent property, and from having had no other children but Mary and another daughter (the father died in their infancy) retaining, for the greater part, her personal attractions and comeliness of appearance, but a woman of low education and violent temper. The answer which she at once returned to Edward's application was remarkable—"Well, Edward! you are a handsome young fellow, and you shall have my daughter." From this time all their wooing passed under the mother's eye, and, in fine, she became herself enamoured of her future son-in-law, and practised every art, both of endearment and of calumny, to

transfer his affections from her daughter to herself. (The outlines of the tale are positive facts, and of no very distant date, though the author has purposely altered the names and the scene of action, as well as invented the characters of the parties and the detail of the incidents.) Edward, however, though perplexed by her strange detractions from her daughter's good qualities, yet in the innocence of his own heart still mistaking her increasing fondness for motherly affection; she at length, overcome by her miserable passion, after much abuse of Mary's temper and moral tendencies, exclaimed with violent emotion,—"O Edward! indeed, indeed, she is not fit for you—she has not a heart to love you as you deserve. It is I that love you! Marry me, Edward! and I will this very day settle all my property on you." The Lover's eyes were now opened and thus taken by surprise, whether from the effect of the horror which he felt, acting as it were hysterically on his nervous system, or that at the first moment he lost the sense of the guilt of the proposal in the feeling of its strangeness and absurdity, he flung her from him and burst into a fit of laughter. Irritated by this almost to frenzy, the woman fell on her knees, and in a loud voice that approached to a scream, she prayed for a curse both on him and her own child. Mary happened to be in the room directly above them, heard Edward's laugh and her mother's blasphemous prayer, and fainted away. He, hearing the fall, ran up stairs, and taking her in his arms, carried her off to Ellen's home, and after some fruitless attempts on her part toward a reconciliation with her mother, she was married to him.—And here the third part of the tale begins.

I was not led to choose this story from any partiality to tragic, much less to monstrous events (though at the time that I composed the verses, somewhat more than twelve years ago, I was less averse to such subjects than at present), but from finding in it a striking proof of the possible effect on the imagination, from an idea violently and suddenly impressed on it. I had been reading Bryan Edwards's account of the effect of the Obi witchcraft on the negroes in the West-Indies, and Hearne's deeply interesting anecdotes of similar workings on the imagination of the copper Indians (those of my readers who have it in their power will be well repaid for the trouble of referring to these works for the passages alluded to); and I conceived the design of showing that instances of this kind are not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes, and of illustrating the mode in which the mind is affected in these cases, and the progress and symptoms of the morbid action on the fancy from the beginning.

The Tale is supposed to be narrated by an old Sexton, in a

country church-yard, to a traveller whose curiosity had been awakened by the appearance of three graves, close by each other, to two only of which there were grave-stones. On the first of these was the name, and dates, as usual: on the second, no name, but only a date, and the words, "The Mercy of God is infinite."]



THE grapes upon the Vicar's wall
Were ripe as ripe could be;
And yellow leaves in sun and wind
Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane
Still swung the strikes of corn:
Dear Lord! it seems but yesterday—
Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through that wood behind the church,
There leads from Edward's door
A mossy track, all over boughed,
For half a mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track
The bride and bridegroom went;
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,
Seemed cheerful and content.

But when they to the church-yard came,
I've heard poor Mary say,
As soon as she stepped into the sun,
Her heart it died away.

And when the Vicar joined their hands,
Her limbs did creep and freeze;
But when they prayed, she thought she saw
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they returned—
I saw poor Mary's back,
Just as she stopped beneath the boughs
Into the mossy track.

Her foot upon the mossy track
The married maiden set:
That moment—I have heard her say—
She wished she could forget.

The shade o'er-flushed her limbs with heat—
Then came a chill like death,
And when the merry bells rang out,
They seemed to stop her breath.

Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive:
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

So five months passed: the mother still
Would never heal the strife;
But Edward was a loving man
And Mary a fond wife.

"My sister may not visit us,
My mother says her nay.
O Edward! you are all to me,
I wish for your sake I could be
More lifesome and more gay

"I'm dull and sad! indeed, indeed
I know I have no reason!
Perhaps I am not well in health,
And 'tis a gloomy season."

'Twas a drizzly time—no ice, no snow!
And on the few fine days
She stirred not out, lest she might meet
Her mother in the ways.

But Ellen, spite of miry ways
And weather dark and dreary,
Trudged every day to Edward's house,
And made them all more cheery.

Oh! Ellen was a faithful friend,
More dear than any sister!
As cheerful too as singing lark;
And she ne'er left them till 'twas dark,
And then they always missed her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came—that day
But few to church repair:
For on that day you know we read
The Commination prayer.

Our late old Vicar, a kind man,
Once, Sir! he said to me,
He wished that service was clean out
Of our good liturgy.

The mother walked into the church—
To Ellen's seat she went:
Though Ellen always kept her church
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her
With courteous looks and mild:
Thought she, "what if her heart should melt,
And all be reconciled!"

The day was scarcely like a day—
The clouds were black outright:
And many a night, with half a moon,
I've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild, against the glass
The rain did beat and bicker;
The church-tower swaying over head
You scarce could hear the Vicar!

And then and there the mother knelt,
And audibly she cried
"Oh! may a clinging curse consume
This woman by my side!

"O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven,
Although thou take my life—
O curse this woman, at whose house
Young Edward wooed his wife.

"By night and day, in bed and bower,
O let her cursed be!"
So having prayed, steady and slow,
She rose up from her knee!
And left the church, nor e'er again
The church-door entered she.

I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,
So pale! I guessed not why:
When she stood up, there plainly was
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all
Came round and asked her why:
Giddy she seemed, and sure, there was
A trouble in her eye

But ere she from the church-door stepped
She smiled and told us why:
"It was a wicked woman's curse,"
Quoth she, "and what care I?"

She smiled, and smiled, and passed it off
Ere from the door she stept—
But all agree it would have been
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,
This was her constant cry—
"It was a wicked woman's curse—
God's good, and what care I?"

There was a hurry in her looks,
Her struggles she redoubled:
"It was a wicked woman's curse,
And why should I be troubled?"

These tears will come—I dandled her
When 'twas the merest fairy—
Good creature! and she hid it all
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale: her arms
Round Ellen's neck she threw;
"O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,
And now she hath cursed you!"

I saw young Edward by himself
Stalk fast adown the lee,
He snatched a stick from every fence,
A twig from every tree.

He snapped them still with hand or knee,
And then away they flew!
As if with his uneasy limbs
He knew not what to do!

You see, good Sir! that single hill?
His farm lies underneath.
He heard it there, he heard it all,
And only gnashed his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love
In all his joys and cares:
And Ellen's name and Mary's name
Fast-linked they both together came,
Whene'er he said his prayers

And in the moment of his prayers
He loved them both alike:
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy
Upon his heart did strike!

He reached his home, and by his looks
They saw his inward strife.
And they clung round him with their arms,
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,
So on his breast she bowed;
Then frenzy melted into grief,
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,
But closelier did she cling,
And turned her face and looked as if
She saw some frightful thing

PART IV.

To see a man tread over graves
I hold it no good mark;
'Tis wicked in the sun and moon,
And bad luck in the dark!

You see that grave? The Lord He gives,
The Lord He takes away:
Oh! 'tis the child of my old age
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one
That was not dug by me,
I'd rather dance upon 'em all
Than tread upon these three!

"Aye, Sexton! 'tis a touching tale"
You, Sir! are but a lad;
This month I'm in my seventieth year,
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary's sister told it me,
For three good hours and more;
Though I had heard it, in the main,
From Edward's self before.

Well! it passed off! the gentle Ellen
Did well nigh dote on Mary;
And she went oftener than before,
And Mary loved her more and more:
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,
To church on Sundays came;
All seemed the same: all seemed so, Sir!
But all was not the same!

Had Ellen lost her mirth? Oh! no!
But she was seldom cheerful;
And Edward looked as if he thought
That Ellen's mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself
Must sing some merry rhyme;
She could not now be glad for hours,
Yet silent all the time.

And when she soothed her friend, through all
Her soothing words 'twas plain
She had a sore grief of her own,
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I'm not grown thin!
And then her wrist she spanned:
And once when Mary was down-cast,
She took her by the hand,
And gazed upon her, and at first
She gently pressed her hand;

Then harder, till her grasp at length
Did gripe like a convulsion!
Alas! said she, we ne'er can be
Made happy by compulsion!

And once her both arms suddenly
Round Mary's neck she flung,
And her heart panted, and she felt
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power
Had she the words to smother;
And with a kind of shriek she cried,
"Oh Christ! you're like your mother!"

So gentle Ellen now no more
Could make this sad house cheery;
And Mary's melancholy ways
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,
Though tired in heart and limb:
He loved no other place, and yet
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,
And nothing in it read;
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,
"Oh! Heaven! that I were dead."

Mary looked up into his face,
And nothing to him said;
She tried to smile, and on his arm
Mournfully leaned her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell
Upon his knees in prayer:
"Her heart is broke! O God! my grief,
It is too great to bear!"

'Twas such a foggy time as makes
Old sextons, Sir! like me,
Rest on their spades to cough; the spring
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,
They came, we knew not how:
You looked about for shade, when scarce
A leaf was on a bough.

It happened then ('twas in the bower
A furlong up the wood:
Perhaps you know the place, and yet
I scarce know how you should),—

No path leads thither, 'tis not nigh
To any pasture-plot;
But clustered near the chattering brook,
Lone hollies marked the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape
As of an arbour took,
A close, round arbour; and it stands
Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still
With scarlet berries hung,
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn,
Just as the first bell rung.

'Tis sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet
To hear the Sabbath-bell,
'Tis sweet to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head
Upon a mossy heap,
With shut-up senses, Edward lay:
That brook e'en on a working day
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had passed a restless night,
And was not well in health;
The women sat down by his side,
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

"The sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen! see!
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your ee;

"A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too:
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory, gay and bright,
Round that small orb, so blue."

And then they argued of those rays,
What colour they might be:
Says this, "they're mostly green;" says that,
"They're amber-like to me."

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts
Were troubling Edward's rest;
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,
And the thumping in his breast.

"A Mother, too!" these self-same words
Did Edward mutter plain;
His face was drawn back on itself,
With horror and huge pain.

Both groaned at once, for both knew well
What thoughts were in his mind;
When he waked up, and stared like one
That hath been just struck blind.

He sat upright; and ere the dream
Had had time to depart,
"O God, forgive me! (he exclaimed)
I have torn out her heart!"

Then Ellen shrieked, and forthwith burst
Into ungentle laughter;
And Mary shivered, where she sat,
And never she smiled after.

Carmen reliquum in futurum tempus relegatum.

morrow! and To-morrow and To-morrow!—

IV. ODES AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

DEJECTION.

AN ODE.

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm."

Ballad of Sir PATRICK SPENCE.

I.

WELL! if the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon clouds in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Eolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the New-moon winter bright!
And overspread with phantom light,

(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II.

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooed,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen;
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel how beautiful they are!

III.

My genial spirits fail,
And what can these avail,

To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element.

V.

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful, and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and showe
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—

We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that ravest without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn,* or blasted tree,

* Tairn is a small lake, generally if not always applied to the lakes up in the mountains, and which are the feeders of

Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of a host in rout,
With groans of trampled men, with smarting
wounds— [cold!
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans and tremulous shudderings—all is over—
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
A tale of less affright,
And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay—
'Tis of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her
mother hear.

VIII.

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!

those in the vallies. This address to the storm-wind will not appear extravagant to those who have heard it at night, and in a mountainous country.

Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice:
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

ODE TO GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE,

ON THE 24TH STANZA IN HER "PASSAGE OVER MOUNT GOTHARD."

"And hail the chapel! hail the platform wild!
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well strung arm, that first preserved his child,
Then aimed the arrow at the tyrant's heart."

SPLENDOUR'S fondly fostered child!
And did you hail the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell?
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learnt you that heroic measure?

Light as a dream your days their circlets ran,
From all that teaches brotherhood to Man

Far, far removed! from want, from hope, from fear!
Enchanting music lulled your infant ear,
Obeisance, praises soothed your infant heart:
Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,
With many a bright obtrusive form of art,
Detained your eye from nature: stately vests,
That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,
Rich viands, and the pleasurable wine,
Were yours unearned by toil; nor could you see
The unenjoying toiler's misery.
And yet, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learnt you that heroic measure?

There crowd your finely-fibred frame,
All living faculties of bliss:
And Genius to your cradle came,
His forehead wreathed with lambent flame,
And bending low, with godlike kiss
Breathed in a more celestial life!
But boasts not many a fair compeer
A heart as sensitive to joy and fear?
And some, perchance, might wage an equal strife,
Some few, to nobler being wrought,
Co-rivals in the nobler gift of thought.
Yet these delight to celebrate
Laurelled war and plumy state;
Or in verse and music dress
Tales of rustic happiness—
Pernicious tales! insidious strains!
That steel the rich man's breast,

And mock the lot unblest,
The sordid vices and the abject pains,
Which evermore must be
The doom of ignorance and penury!
But you, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learnt you that heroic measure?

—You were a mother! That most holy name,
Which Heaven and Nature bless,
I may not vilely prostitute to those
Whose infants owe them less
Than the poor caterpillar owes
Its gaudy parent fly.
You were a mother! at your bosom fed
The babes that loved you. You, with laughing eye,
Each twilight-thought, each nascent feeling read,
Which you yourself created. Oh! delight!
A second time to be a mother,
Without the mother's bitter groans:
Another thought, and yet another,
By touch or taste, by looks or tones
O'er the growing sense to roll,
The mother of your infant's Soul!
The Angel of the Earth, who, while he guides,
His chariot-planet round the goal of day,
All trembling gazes on the eye of God,
A moment turned his awful face away;
And as he viewed you, from his aspect sweet
New influences in your being rose,
Blest intuitions and communions fleet

With living Nature, in her joys and woes!
Thenceforth your soul rejoiced to see
The shrine of social Liberty!
O beautiful! O Nature's child!
'Twas thence you hailed the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Thence learnt you that heroic measure.

ODE TO TRANQUILLITY.



RANQUILLITY! thou better name
Than all the family of Fame!
Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
To low intrigue, or factious rage:
For oh! dear child of thoughtful Truth,
To thee I gave my early youth,
And left the bark, and blest the stedfast shore,
Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,
On him but seldom, Power divine,
Thy spirit rests! Satiety
And sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,
Mock the tired worldling. Idle hope
And dire remembrance interlope,
To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind:
The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead
At morning through the accustomed mead;

And in the sultry summer's heat
Will build me up a mossy seat!
And when the gust of Autumn crowds
And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,
Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,
Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,
To thee I dedicate the whole!
And while within myself I trace
The greatness of some future race,
Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present works of present man—
A wild and dreamlike trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile!

TO A YOUNG FRIEND,

ON HIS PROPOSING TO DOMESTICATE WITH THE AUTHOR.



MOUNT, not wearisome and bare and steep,
But a green mountain variously uppiled,
Where o'er the jutting rocks soft mosses creep,
Or coloured lichens with slow oosing weep;
Where cypress and the darker yew start wild;
And 'mid the summer torrent's gentle dash
Dance brightened the red clusters of the ash;
Beneath whose boughs, by those still sounds beguiled,
Calm Pensiveness might muse herself to sleep;
Till haply startled by some fleecy dam,

That rustling on the bushy cliff above,
With melancholy bleat of anxious love,
Made meek enquiry for her wandering lamb:
Such a green mountain 'twere most sweet to climb,
E'en while the bosom ached with loneliness—
How more than sweet, if some dear friend should bless
The adventurous toil, and up the path sublime
Now lead, now follow: the glad landscape round,
Wide and more wide, increasing without bound!

O then 'twere loveliest sympathy, to mark
The berries of the half-uprooted ash
Dripping and bright; and list the torrent's dash,—
Beneath the cypress, or the yew more dark,
Seated at ease, on some smooth mossy rock;
In social silence now, and now to unlock
The treasured heart; arm linked in friendly arm,
Save if the one, his muse's witching charm
Muttering brow-bent, at unwatched distance lag;
Till high o'erhead his beckoning friend appears,
And from the forehead of the topmost crag
Shouts eagerly: for haply there uprears
That shadowing pine its old romantic limbs,
Which latest shall detain the enamoured sight
Seen from below, when eve the valley dims,
Tinged yellow with the rich departing light;
And haply, basoned in some unsunned cleft,
A beauteous spring, the rock's collected tears,
Sleeps sheltered there, scarce wrinkled by the gale!
Together thus, the world's vain turmoil left,
Stretched on the crag, and shadowed by the pine,
And bending o'er the clear delicious fount,
Ah! dearest youth! it were a lot divine
To cheat our noons in moralizing mood,

While west-winds fanned our temples toil-bedewed:
Then downwards slope, oft pausing, from the mount,
To some low mansion, in some woody dale,
Where smiling with blue eye, domestic bliss
Gives this the husband's, that the brother's kiss.

Thus rudely versed in allegoric lore,
The Hill of Knowledge I essayed to trace;
That verdurous hill with many a resting-place,
And many a stream, whose warbling waters pour
To glad, and fertilize the subject plains;
That hill with secret springs, and nooks untrod,
And many a fancy-blest and holy sod
Where Inspiration, his diviner strains
Low murmuring, lay; and starting from the rocks
Stiff evergreens, whose spreading foliage mocks
Want's barren soil, and the bleak frosts of age,
And Bigotry's mad fire-invoking rage!
O meek retiring spirit! we will climb,
Cheering and cheered, this lovely hill sublime;
And from the stirring world up-lifted high,
(Whose noises, faintly wafted on the wind,
To quiet musings shall attune the mind,
And oft the melancholy theme supply)
There, while the prospect through the gazing eye
Pours all its healthful greenness on the soul,
We'll smile at wealth, and learn to smile at fame,
Our hopes, our knowledge, and our joys the same,
As neighbouring fountains image, each the whole:
Then when the mind hath drunk its fill of truth,
We'll discipline the heart to pure delight,
Rekindling sober joy's domestic flame.
They whom I love shall love thee, honoured youth!
Now may Heaven realize this vision bright!

1796.

LINES

TO W. L. ESQ. WHILE HE SANG A SONG TO PURCELL'S MUSIC.



HILE my young cheek retains its healthful hues,
And I have many friends who hold me dear;
L———! methinks, I would not often hear
Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose
All memory of the wrongs and sore distress,
For which my miserable brethren weep!
But should uncomforted misfortunes steep
My daily bread in tears and bitterness;
And if at death's dread moment I should lie
With no beloved face at my bed-side,
To fix the last glance of my closing eye,
Methinks, such strains, breathed by my angel-guide,
Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,
Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG MAN OF FORTUNE

WHO ABANDONED HIMSELF TO AN INDOLENT AND CAUSELESS MELANCHOLY.



ENCE that fantastic wantonness of woe,
O Youth to partial fortune vainly dear!
To plundered want's half-sheltered hovel go,
Go, and some hunger-bitten infant hear
Moan haply in a dying mother's ear:
Or when the cold and dismal fog-damps brood
O'er the rank church-yard with sear elm-leaves strewed,
Pace round some widow's grave, whose dearer part
Was slaughtered, where o'er his uncoffined limbs
The flocking flesh-birds screamed! Then, while thy heart
Groans, and thine eye a fiercer sorrow dims,
Know (and the truth shall kindle thy young mind)
What nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal!
O abject! if, to sickly dreams resigned,
All effortless thou leave life's common-weal
A prey to tyrants, murderers of mankind.

SONNET TO THE RIVER OTTER.



EAR native brook! wild streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have past,
What happy, and what mournful hours, since last
I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And bedded sand that, veined with various dyes,
Gleamed through thy bright transparence! On my way,
Visions of childhood! oft have ye beguiled
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:
Ah! that once more I were a careless child!

SONNET.

COMPOSED ON A JOURNEY HOMEWARD; THE AUTHOR HAVING RECEIVED INTELLIGENCE OF THE BIRTH OF A SON, SEPT. 20, 1796.



FT o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings, as perplex the soul

Self-questioned in her sleep: and some have said
We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.
O my sweet baby! when I reach my door,
If heavy looks should tell me thou art dead
(As sometimes, through excess of hope, I fear)
I think, that I should struggle to believe
Thou wert a spirit, to this nether sphere
Sentenced for some more venial crime to grieve;
Did'st scream, then spring to meet Heaven's quick reprieve,
While we wept idly o'er thy little bier!

SONNET,

TO A FRIEND WHO ASKED HOW I FELT WHEN THE NURSE FIRST PRESENTED MY INFANT TO ME.

CHARLES! my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scanned that face of feeble infancy:
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my child might be!
But when I saw it on its mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile)
Then I was thrilled and melted, and most warm
Impressed a father's kiss: and all beguiled
Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
I seemed to see an angel-form appear—

* Ἦν που ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ πρὶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ εἴδει γενέσθαι.
PLAT. *in Phædon.*

'Twas even thine, beloved woman mild!
So for the mother's sake the child was dear,
And dearer was the mother for the child.

THE VIRGIN'S CRADLE-HYMN.

COPIED FROM A PRINT OF THE VIRGIN, IN A ROMAN CATHOLIC VILLAGE IN GERMANY.



ORMI Jesu! Mater ridet,
Quæ tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!
Si non dormis, Mater plorat,
Inter fila cantans orat
Blande, veni, somnule.

ENGLISH.

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling:
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

EPITAPH ON AN INFANT.



TS balmy lips the infant blest
Relaxing from its mother's breast,
How sweet it heaves the happy sigh
Of innocent satiety!

And such my infant's latest sigh!
O tell, rude stone! the passer-by,
That here a pretty babe doth lie,
Death sang to sleep with lullaby.

MELANCHOLY.*

A FRAGMENT.

STRETCHED on a mouldered Abbey's broadest wall,
Where ruining ivies propt the ruins steep—
Her folded arms wrapping her tattered pall,
Had Melancholy mused herself to sleep.
The fern was pressed beneath her hair,
The dark green Adder's Tongue† was there;
And still as past the flagging sea-gale weak,
The long lank leaf bowed fluttering o'er her cheek.

That pallid cheek was flushed: her eager look
Beamed eloquent in slumber! Inly wrought,
Imperfect sounds her moving lips forsook,
And her bent forehead worked with troubled thought.
Strange was the dream that filled her soul,
Nor did not whispering spirits roll
A mystic tumult, and a fateful rhyme
Mixed with wild shapings of the unborn time.

* First published in the Morning Chronicle, in the year 1794.

† A botanical mistake. The plant I meant is called the Hart's Tongue; but this would unluckily spoil the poetical effect. *Cedat ergo Botanice.*

TELL'S BIRTH-PLACE.

IMITATED FROM STOLBERG.

I.



ARK this holy chapel well!
The birth-place, this, of William Tell.
Here, where stands God's altar dread,
Stood his parents' marriage-bed.

II.

Here first, an infant to her breast,
Him his loving mother prest;
And kissed the babe, and blessed the day,
And prayed as mothers use to pray.

III.

"Vouchsafe him health, O God! and give
The child Thy servant still to live!"
But God had destined to do more
Through him, than through an armed power.

IV.

God gave him reverence of laws,
Yet stirring blood in Freedom's cause—
A spirit to His rocks akin,
The eye of the hawk, and the fire therein.

V.

To Nature and to Holy Writ
Alone did God the boy commit:
Where flashed and roared the torrent, oft
His soul found wings, and soared aloft!

VI.

The straining oar and chamois chase
Had formed his limbs to strength and grace:
On wave and wind the boy would toss,
Was great, nor knew how great he was!

VII.

He knew not that his chosen hand,
Made strong by God, his native land
Would rescue from the shameful yoke
Of Slavery——the which he broke!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I.

THE Shepherds went their hasty way,
And found the lowly stable-shed
Where the Virgin-Mother lay:
And now they checked their eager tread,
For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,
A mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

II.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng,
Around them shone, suspending night!
While sweeter than a Mother's song,
Blest Angels heralded the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high! and Peace on Earth.

III.

She listened to the tale divine,
And closer still the Babe she pressed;
And while she cried, the Babe is mine!
The milk rushed faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.

IV.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
Poor, simple, and of low estate!
That strife should vanish, battle cease,
O why should this thy soul elate?
Sweet music's loudest note, the poet's story,
Did'st thou ne'er love to hear of fame and glory?

V.

And is not War a youthful king,
A stately hero clad in mail?
Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;
Him earth's majestic monarchs hail
Their friend, their playmate! and his bold bright eye
Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

VI.

"Tell this in some more courtly scene,
To maids and youths in robes of state!
I am a woman poor and mean,
And therefore is my soul elate.
War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,
That from the aged father tears his child!

VII.

"A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,
He kills the sire and starves the son;

The husband kills, and from her board
Steals all his widow's toil had won;
Plunders God's world of beauty; rends away
All safety from the night, all comfort from the day.

VIII.

"Then wisely is my soul elate,
That strife should vanish, battle cease:
I'm poor and of a low estate,
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.
Joy rises in me, like a summer's morn:
Peace, Peace on Earth, the Prince of Peace is born."

HUMAN LIFE,

ON THE DENIAL OF IMMORTALITY. A FRAGMENT.



F dead, we cease to be; if total gloom
Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom,
Whose sound and motion not alone declare,
But are their whole of being! If the breath
Be life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death;
O Man! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes,
Surplus of nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some nigh-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She formed with restless hands unconsciously.

Blank accident! nothing's anomaly!
If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,
Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes thy fears,
The counter-weights!—Thy laughter and thy tears
Mean but themselves, each fittest to create
And to repay the other! Why rejoices
Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood,
Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,
Image of image, ghost of ghostly elf,
That such a thing, as thou, feel'st warm or cold?
Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold
These costless shadows of thy shadowy self?
Be sad! be glad! be neither! seek, or shun!
Thou hast no reason why! Thou canst have none!
Thy being's being is contradiction.

AN ODE TO THE RAIN.

COMPOSED BEFORE DAY-LIGHT, ON THE MORNING APPOINTED FOR THE DEPARTURE OF A VERY WORTHY, BUT NOT VERY PLEASANT VISITOR; WHOM IT WAS FEARED THE RAIN MIGHT DETAIN.

I.

I KNOW it is dark; and though I have lain
Awake, as I guess, an hour or twain,
I have not once opened the lids of my eyes,
But I lie in the dark, as a blind man lies.
O Rain! that I lie listening to,

You're but a doleful sound at best:
I owe you little thanks, 'tis true,
For breaking thus my needful rest!
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain! you will but take your flight,
I'll neither rail, nor malice keep,
Though sick and sore for want of sleep:
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

II.

O Rain! with your dull two-fold sound,
The clash hard by, and the murmur all round!
You know, if you know aught, that we,
Both night and day, but ill agree:
For days, and months, and almost years,
Have limped on through this vale of tears,
Since body of mine, and rainy weather,
Have lived on easy terms together.
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain! you will but take your flight,
Though you should come again to-morrow,
And bring with you both pain and sorrow;
Though stomach should sicken, and knees should swell—
I'll nothing speak of you but well,
But only now for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

III.

Dear Rain! I ne'er refused to say
You're a good creature in your way.
Nay, I could write a book myself,
Would fit a parson's lower shelf,

Shewing, how very good you are—
What then? sometimes it must be fair!
And if sometimes, why not to-day?
Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

IV

Dear Rain! if I've been cold and shy,
Take no offence! I'll tell you, why.
A dear old Friend e'en now is here,
And with him came my sister dear;
After long absence now first met,
Long months by pain and grief beset—
We three dear friends! in truth, we groan
Impatiently to be alone.
We three, you mark! and not one more!
The strong wish makes my spirit sore.
We have so much to talk about,
So many sad things to let out;
So many tears in our eye-corners,
Sitting like little Jacky Horners—
In short, as soon as it is day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away.

V.

And this I'll swear to you, dear Rain!
Whenever you shall come again,
Be you as dull as e'er you could
(And by the bye 'tis understood,
You're not so pleasant, as you're good),
Yet, knowing well your worth and place,
I'll welcome you with cheerful face;
And though you stayed a week or more,
Were ten times duller than before;

Yet with kind heart, and right good will,
I'll sit and listen to your still;
Nor should you go away, dear Rain!
Uninvited to remain.
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away.

THE VISIT OF THE GODS.

IMITATED FROM SCHILLER.

NEVER, believe me,
Appear the Immortals,
Never alone:
Scarce had I welcomed the sorrow-beguiler,
Iacchus! but in came boy Cupid, the smiler;
Lo! Phœbus, the glorious, descends from his throne!
They advance, they float in, the Olympians all!
With Divinities fills my
Terrestrial hall!

How shall I yield you
Due entertainment,
Celestial quire?
Me rather, bright guests! with your wings of upbuoyance
Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,
That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre!
Hah! we mount! on their pinions they waft up my soul!
O give me the nectar!
O fill me the bowl!

Give him the nectar!
Pour out for the poet!
Hebe! pour free!
Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
That Styx the detested no more he may view,
And like one of us gods may conceit him to be!
Thanks, Hebe! I quaff it! Io Pæan, I cry!
The wine of the Immortals
Forbids me to die!

ELEGY,

IMITATED FROM ONE OF AKENSIDE'S BLANK-VERSE INSCRIPTIONS.

NEAR the lone pile with ivy overspread,
Fast by the rivulet's sleep-persuading sound,
Where "sleeps the moonlight" on yon verdant bed—
O humbly press that consecrated ground!

For there does Edmund rest, the learned swain!
And there his spirit most delights to rove:
Young Edmund! famed for each harmonious strain,
And the sore wounds of ill-requited love.

Like some tall tree that spreads its branches wide,
And loads the west-wind with its soft perfume,
His manhood blossomed; till the faithless pride
Of fair Matilda sank him to the tomb.

But soon did righteous heaven her guilt pursue!
Where'er with wildered steps she wandered pale,
Still Edmund's image rose to blast her view,
Still Edmund's voice accused her in each gale.

With keen regret, and conscious guilt's alarms,
Amid the pomp of affluence she pined;
Nor all that lured her faith from Edmund's arms
Could lull the wakeful horror of her mind.

Go, Traveller! tell the tale with sorrow fraught:
Some tearful maid perchance, or blooming youth,
May hold it in remembrance; and be taught
That riches cannot pay for Love or Truth.

THE DESTINY OF NATIONS.

A VISION.

AUSPICIOUS Reverence! Hush all meaner song,
Ere we the deep preluding strain have poured
To the Great Father, only rightful King,
Eternal Father! King Omnipotent!
Beneath Whose shadowy banners, wide unfurled,
Justice leads forth her tyrant-quelling hosts.

Such symphony requires best instrument.
Seize, then, my soul! from Freedom's trophied dome
The harp which hangeth high between the shields
Of Brutus and Leonidas: With that
Strong music, that soliciting spell, force back
Earth's free and stirring spirit that lies entranced.

For what is freedom, but the unfettered use
Of all the powers which God for use had given?
But chiefly this, Him first, Him last to view
Through meaner powers and secondary things
Effulgent, as through clouds that veil His blaze.
For all that meets the bodily sense I deem

Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
For infant minds; and we in this low world
Placed with our backs to bright reality,
That we may learn with young unwounded ken
The substance from its shadow. Infinite Love,
Whose latence is the plenitude of all,
Thou with retracted beams, and self-eclipse
Veiling revealest thy eternal sun.

But some there are who deem themselves most free
When they within this gross and visible sphere
Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent
Proud in their meanness: and themselves they cheat
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
Those blind omniscients, those almighty slaves,
Untenanting creation of its God.

But properties are God: the naked mass
(If mass there be, fantastic guess or ghost)
Acts only by its inactivity.
Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think
That as one body seems the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organised;
So by a strange and dim similitude
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs
With absolute ubiquity of thought
(His one eternal self-affirming act!)
All his involved Monads, that yet seem
With various province and apt agency
Each to pursue its own self-centering end.
Some nurse the infant diamond in the mine;

Some roll the genial juices through the oak;
Some drive the mutinous clouds to clash in air,
And rushing on the storm with whirlwind speed,
Yoke the red lightnings to their volleying car.
Thus these pursue their never-varying course,
No eddy in their stream. Others, more wild,
With complex interests weaving human fates,
Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
Evolve the process of eternal good.

And what if some rebellious, o'er dark realms
Arrogate power? yet these train up to God,
And on the rude eye, unconfirmed for day,
Flash meteor-lights better than total gloom.
As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapoury head
The Laplander beholds the far-off sun
Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,
While yet the stern and solitary night
Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn
With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,
Guiding his course or by Niemi lake
Or Balda-Zhiok,* or the mossy stone
Of Solfar-Kapper,† while the snowy blast
Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,
Making the poor babe at its mother's back‡

* *Balda Zhiok: i. e.* mons altitudinis, the highest mountain in Lapland.

† "*Solfa-Kapper:* capitium Solfar, hic locus omnium quot-quot veterum Lapponum superstitio sacrificiis religiosoque cultui dedicavit, celebratissimus erat, in parte sinus australis situs, semimilliaris spatio a mari distans. Ipse locus, quem curiositatis gratia aliquando me invisisse memini, duabus prealtis lapidibus, sibi invicem oppositis, quorum alter musco circumdatus erat, constabat."—LEMNIUS, *De Lapponibus.*

‡ The Lapland women carry their infants at their back in a piece of excavated wood, which serves them for a cradle. Opposite to the infant's mouth there is a hole for it to breathe

Scream in its scanty cradle; he the while
Wins gentle solace as with upward eye
He marks the streamy banners of the North,
Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join
Who there in floating robes of rosy light
Dance sportively. For Fancy is the power
That first unsensualizes the dark mind,
Giving it new delights; and bids it swell
With wild activity; and peopling air,
By obscure fears of beings invisible,
Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
Of the present impulse, teaching self-control,
Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. Wherefore not vain,
Nor yet without permitted power impressed,
I deem those legends terrible, with which
The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng
Whether of pitying Spirits that make their moan
O'er slaughtered infants, or that giant bird
Vuokho, of whose rushing wings the noise
Is tempest, when the unutterable* shape
Speeds from the mother of Death, and utters once
That shriek, which never Murderer heard, and lived.
Or if the Greenland Wizard in strange trance
Pierces the untravelled realms of Ocean's bed
(Where live the innocent as far from cares

through.—"Mirandum prorsus est et vix credibile nisi cui vidisse contigit. Lappones hyeme iter facientes per vastos montes, perque horrida et invia tesqua, eo presertim tempore quo omnia perpetuis nivibus obtecta sunt et nives ventis agitantur et in gyros aguntur, viam ad destinata loca absque errore invenire posse. Infantem autem infantem, si quem habeat, ipsa mater in dorso bajulat, in excavato ligno (Gierd'k ipsi vocant) quod pro cunis utuntur: in hoc infans pannis et pellibus convolutus colligatus jacet."—LAEMIUS, *De Lapponibus.*

* Jaibme Aibmo.

As from the storms and overwhelming waves
Dark tumbling on the surface of the deep),
Over the abysm, even to that uttermost cave
By mis-shaped prodigies beleaguered, such
As earth ne'er bred, nor air, nor the upper sea.

There dwells the Fury Form, whose unheard name
With eager eye, pale cheek, suspended breath,
And lips half-opening with the dread of sound,
Unsleeping Silence guards, worn out with fear
Lest haply escaping on some treacherous blast
The fateful word let slip the elements
And frenzy Nature. Yet the wizard her,
Armed with Torngarsuck's * power, the Spirit of Good,
Forces to unchain the foodful progeny
Of the Ocean stream.—Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God
Teaching reliance, and medicinal hope,
Till from Bethabra northward, heavenly Truth
With gradual steps winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure.

If there be beings of higher class than Man,
I deem no nobler province they possess,
Than by disposal of apt circumstance
To rear up kingdoms: and the deeds they prompt,
Distinguishing from mortal agency,

* They call the Good Spirit, Torngarsuck. The other great but malignant spirit is a nameless Female; she dwells under the sea in a great house, where she can detain in captivity all the animals of the ocean by her magic power. When a dearth befalls the Greenlanders, an Angekok or magician must undertake a journey thither: he passes through the kingdom of souls, over a horrible abyss into the Palace of this phantom, and by his enchantments causes the captive creatures to ascend directly to the surface of the ocean.—*See* CRANTZ's *Hist. of Greenland*, vol. i. 206.

They choose their human ministers from such states
As still the Epic song half fears to name,
Repelled from all the minstrelsies that strike
The palace-roof and soothe the monarch's pride.

And such, perhaps, the Spirit, who (if words
Witnessed by answering deeds may claim our faith)
Held commune with that warrior-maid of France
Who scourged the Invader.—From her infant days,
With Wisdom, mother of retired thoughts,
Her soul had dwelt; and she was quick to mark
The good and evil thing, in human lore
Undisciplined. For lowly was her birth,
And Heaven had doomed her early years to toil,
That pure from tyranny's least deed, herself
Unfeared by fellow-natures, she might wait
On the poor labouring man with kindly looks,
And minister refreshment to the tired
Way-wanderer, when along the rough hewn bench
The sweltry man had stretched him, and aloft
Vacantly watched the rudely pictured board
Which on the mulberry bough with welcome creak
Swung to the pleasant breeze. Here, too, the Maid
Learnt more than schools could teach: Man's shifting mind,
His vices and his sorrows! and full oft
At tales of cruel wrong and strange distress
Had wept and shivered. To the tottering eld
Still as a daughter would she run: she placed
His cold limbs at the sunny door, and loved
To hear him story, in his garrulous sort,
Of his eventful years, all come and gone.

So twenty seasons past. The Virgin's form,
Active and tall, nor sloth nor luxury

Had shrunk or paled. Her front sublime and broad,
Her flexile eye-brows wildly haired and low,
And her full eye, now bright, now unillumed,
Spake more than Woman's thought: and all her face
Was moulded to such features, as declared,
That pity there had oft and strongly worked,
And sometimes indignation. Bold her mien,
And like a haughty huntress of the woods
She moved: yet sure she was a gentle maid!
And in each motion her most innocent soul
Beamed forth so brightly, that who saw would say,
Guilt was a thing impossible in her!
Nor idly would have said, for she had lived
In this bad world, as in a place of tombs,
And touched not the pollutions of the dead.

'Twas the cold season when the rustic's eye
From the drear desolate whiteness of his fields
Rolls for relief to watch the skiey tints
And clouds slow varying their huge imagery;
When now, as she was wont, the healthful Maid
Had left her pallet ere one beam of day
Slanted the fog-smoke. She went forth alone,
Urged by the indwelling angel-guide, that oft,
With dim inexplicable sympathies
Disquieting the heart, shapes out man's course
To the predoomed adventure. Now the ascent
She climbs of that steep upland, on whose top
The Pilgrim-man, who long since eve had watched
The alien shine of unconcerning stars,
Shouts to himself, there first the abbey-lights
Seen in Neufchatel's vale; now slopes adown
The winding sheep-track vale-ward: when, behold
In the first entrance of the level road

An unattended team! The foremost horse
Lay with stretched limbs; the others, yet alive
But stiff and cold, stood motionless, their manes
Hoar with the frozen night dews. Dismally
The dark-red dawn now glimmered; but its gleams
Disclosed no face of man. The maiden paused,
Then hailed who might be near. No voice replied.
From the thwart wain at length there reached her ear
A sound so feeble that it almost seemed
Distant—and feebly, with slow effort pushed,
A miserable man crept forth: his limbs
The silent frost had eat, scathing like fire.
Faint on the shafts he rested. She, mean time,
Saw crowded close beneath the coverture
A mother and her children—lifeless all,
Yet lovely! not a lineament was marred—
Death had put on so slumber-like a form!
It was a piteous sight; and one, a babe,
The crisp milk frozen on its innocent lips,
Lay on the woman's arm, its little hand
Stretched on her bosom.

Mutely questioning,
The Maid gazed wildly at the living wretch.
He, his head feebly turning, on the group
Looked with a vacant stare, and his eye spoke
The drowsy calm that steals on worn-out anguish.
She shuddered: but, each vainer pang subdued,
Quick disentangling from the foremost horse
The rustic bands, with difficulty and toil
The stiff, cramped team forced homeward. There arrived
Anxiously tends him she with healing herbs,
And weeps and prays—but the numb power of death

Spreads o'er his limbs; and ere the noon-tide hour,
The hovering spirits of his wife and babes
Hail him immortal! Yet amid his pangs,
With interruptions long from ghastly throes,
His voice had faltered out this simple tale.

The village, where he dwelt a husbandman,
By sudden inroad had been seized and fired
Late on the yester evening. With his wife
And little ones he hurried his escape.
They saw the neighbouring hamlets flame, they heard
Uproar and shrieks! and terror-struck drove on
Through unfrequented roads, a weary way!
But saw nor house nor cottage. All had quenched
Their evening hearth-fire: for the alarm had spread.
The air clipped keen, the night was fanged with frost,
And they provisionless! The weeping wife
Ill hushed her children's moans; and still they moaned,
Till fright and cold and hunger drank their life.
They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.
He only, lashing his o'er-wearied team,
Gained a sad respite, till beside the base
Of the high hill his foremost horse dropped dead.
Then hopeless, strengthless, sick for lack of food,
He crept beneath the coverture, entranced,
Till wakened by the maiden.—Such his tale.

Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffered,
Stung with too keen a sympathy, the Maid
Brooded with moving lips, mute, startful, dark!
And now her flushed tumultuous features shot
Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye

Of misery fancy-crazed! and now once more
Naked, and void, and fixed, and all, within,
The unquiet silence of confused thought
And shapeless feelings. For a mighty hand
Was strong upon her, till in the heat of soul
To the high hill-top tracing back her steps,
Aside the beacon, up whose smouldered stones
The tender ivy-trails crept thinly, there,
Unconscious of the driving element,
Yea, swallowed up in the ominous dream, she sate,
Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber! a dim anguish
Breathed from her look! and still with pant and sob
Inly she toiled to flee, and still subdued
Felt an inevitable Presence near.

Thus as she toiled in troublous ecstasy,
A horror of great darkness wrapt her round,
And a voice uttered forth unearthly tones,
Calming her soul,—"O Thou of the Most High
Chosen, whom all the perfected in Heaven
Behold expectant ——"

[The following fragments were intended to form part of the Poem when finished.]

"Maid beloved of Heaven!
(To her the tutelary Power exclaimed)
Of Chaos the adventurous progeny
Thou seest; foul missionaries of foul sire,
Fierce to regain the losses of that hour
When Love rose glittering, and his gorgeous wings
Over the abyss fluttered with such glad noise,
As what time after long and pestful calms,
With slimy shapes and miscreated life
Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze

Wakens the merchant-sail uprising. Night
A heavy unimaginable moan
Sent forth, when she the Protoplast beheld
Stand beauteous on confusion's charmed wave.
Moaning she fled, and entered the Profound
That leads with downward windings to the Cave
Of darkness palpable, desert of Death
Sunk deep beneath Gehenna's massy roots.
There many a dateless age the beldame lurked
And trembled; till engendered by fierce Hate,
Fierce Hate and gloomy Hope, a Dream arose,
Shaped like a black cloud marked with streaks of fire.
It roused the Hell-Hag: she the dew-damp wiped
From off her brow, and through the uncouth maze
Retraced her steps; but ere she reached the mouth
Of that drear labyrinth, shuddering she paused,
Nor dared re-enter the diminished Gulf.
As through the dark vaults of some mouldered tower
(Which, fearful to approach, the evening hind
Circles at distance in his homeward way)
The winds breathe hollow, deemed the plaining groan
Of prisoned spirits; with such fearful voice
Night murmured, and the sound through Chaos went.
Leaped at her call her hideous-fronted brood!
A dark behest they heard, and rushed on earth,
Since that sad hour, in camps and courts adored,
Rebels from God, and tyrants o'er Mankind!"

From his obscure haunt
Shrieked Fear, of Cruelty the ghastly dam,
Feverish yet freezing, eager-paced yet slow,
As she that creeps from forth her swampy reeds,

Ague, the biform hag! when early Spring
Beams on the marsh-bred vapours.

"Even so (the exulting Maiden said)
The sainted heralds of good tidings fell,
And thus they witnessed God! But now the clouds
Treading, and storms beneath their feet, they soar
Higher, and higher soar, and soaring sing
Loud songs of triumph! O ye spirits of God,
Hover around my mortal agonies!"
She spake, and instantly faint melody
Melts on her ear, soothing and sad, and slow.
Such measures, as at calmest midnight heard
By aged hermit in his holy dream,
Foretell and solace death; and now they rise
Louder, as when with harp and mingled voice
The white-robed* multitude of slaughtered saints
At Heaven's wide-opened portals gratulant
Receive some martyred Patriot. The harmony
Entranced the Maid, till each suspended sense
Brief slumber seized, and confused ecstasy.

At length awakening slow, she gazed around:
And through a mist, the relic of that trance,
Still thinning as she gazed, an Isle appeared,
Its high, o'erhanging, white, broad-breasted cliffs

* Revel. vi. 9, 11. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Glassed on the subject ocean. A vast plain
Stretched opposite, where ever and anon
The ploughman following sad his meagre team
Turned up fresh sculls unstartled, and the bones
Of fierce hate-breathing combatants, who there
All mingled lay beneath the common earth,
Death's gloomy reconcilement! O'er the fields
Stepped a fair Form, repairing all she might,
Her temples olive-wreathed; and where she trod,
Fresh flowerets rose, and many a foodful herb.
But wan her cheek, her footsteps insecure,
And anxious pleasure beamed in her faint eye,
As she had newly left a couch of pain,
Pale convalescent! (Yet some time to rule
With power exclusive o'er the willing world,
That blest prophetic mandate then fulfilled,
Peace be on Earth!) A happy while, but brief,
She seemed to wander with assiduous feet,
And healed the recent harm of chill and blight,
And nursed each plant that fair and virtuous grew.

But soon a deep precursive sound moaned hollow:
Black rose the clouds, and now, (as in a dream)
Their reddening shapes, transformed to warrior-hosts,
Coursed o'er the sky, and battled in mid-air.
Nor did not the large blood-drops fall from heaven
Portentous! while aloft were seen to float,
Like hideous features looming on the mist,
Wan stains of ominous light! Resigned, yet sad,
The fair Form bowed her olive-crowned brow:
Then o'er the plain with oft reverted eye
Fled till a place of tombs she reached, and there
Within a ruined sepulchre obscure
Found hiding-place.

The delegated Maid
Gazed through her tears, then in sad tones exclaimed,
"Thou mild-eyed Form! wherefore, ah! wherefore fled?
The power of Justice, like a name all light,
Shone from thy brow; but all they, who unblamed
Dwelt in thy dwellings, call thee Happiness.
Ah! why, uninjured and unprofited,
Should multitudes against their brethren rush?
Why sow they guilt, still reaping misery?
Lenient of care, thy songs, O Peace! are sweet,
As after showers the perfumed gale of eve,
That flings the cool drops on a feverous cheek:
And gay thy grassy altar piled with fruits.
But boasts the shrine of demon War one charm,
Save that with many an orgie strange and foul,
Dancing around with interwoven arms,
The maniac Suicide and giant Murder
Exult in their fierce union! I am sad,
And know not why the simple peasants crowd
Beneath the chieftains' standard!" Thus the Maid.

To her the tutelary Spirit replied:
"When luxury and lust's exhausted stores
No more can rouse the appetites of kings;
When the low flattery of their reptile lords
Falls flat and heavy on the accustomed ear;
When eunuchs sing, and fools buffoonery make,
And dancers writhe their harlot-limbs in vain:
Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
Flemingly agitate their stagnant hearts;
Its hopes, its fears, its victories, its defeats,
Insipid royalty's keen condiment!
Therefore, uninjured and unprofited,

(Victims at once and executioners)
The congregated husbandmen lay waste
The vineyard and the harvest. As along
The Bothnic coast, or southward of the Line,
Though hushed the winds and cloudless the high noon,
Yet if Leviathan, weary of ease,
In sports unwieldy toss his island-bulk,
Ocean behind him billows, and before
A storm of waves breaks foamy on the strand.
And hence, for times and seasons bloody and dark,
Short Peace shall skin the wounds of causeless War,
And War, his strained sinews knit anew,
Still violate the unfinished works of Peace.
But yonder look! for more demands thy view!"
He said: and straightway from the opposite isle
A vapour sailed, as when a cloud, exhaled
From Egypt's fields that steam hot pestilence,
Travels the sky for many a trackless league,
Till o'er some death-doomed land, distant in vain,
It broods incumbent. Forthwith from the plain,
Facing the isle, a brighter cloud arose,
And steered its course which way the vapour went.

The Maiden paused, musing what this might mean.
But long time passed not, ere that brighter cloud
Returned more bright: along the plain it swept;
And soon from forth its bursting sides emerged
A dazzling form, broad-bosomed, bold of eye,
And wild her hair, save where with laurels bound.
Not more majestic stood the healing God,
When from his bow the arrow sped that slew
Huge Python. Shrieked Ambition's giant throng,
And with them hissed the locust-fiends that crawled

And glittered in Corruption's slimy track.
Great was their wrath, for short they knew their reign:
And such commotion made they, and uproar,
As when the mad tornado bellows through
The guilty islands of the western main,
What time departing from their native shores,
Eboe, or Koromantyn's* plain of palms,

* The Slaves in the West-Indies consider death as a passport to their native country. This sentiment is thus expressed in the introduction to a Greek Prize-Ode on the Slave-Trade, of which the thoughts are better than the language in which they are conveyed.

Ω σκοτου πυλαι, Θανατε, προλιπων
Ες γενος σπευδοις υπο ζευχθεν Ατῃ·
Ου ξεμισθησῃ γενυων σπαραγμοις
Ουδ' ολολυγμω,

Αλλα και κυκλοισι χορoιτυποισι
Κ' αισμασιτιων Χαρᾳ· φοβερος μεν εσσι,
Αλλ' ομως Ελευθερικε συνοικεις,
Στυγνε Τυρανν!

Δασκιοις επι πτερυγεσσι σησι
Α! θαλασσιον καθορωντες οιδμα
Αιθροπλαγκτοις υπο ποσσ' ανεισι
Πατριδ' επ' αιαν.

Ενθα μεν Ερασται Εριμανυσιν
Αμφι πηγησιν κιτρινων υπ' αλσων,
Οσσ' υπο βροτοις επαθον βροτοι, τα
Δεινα λεγοντι.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

Leaving the gates of darkness, O Death! hasten thou to a race yoked with misery! Thou wilt not be received with lacerations of cheeks, nor with funereal ululation—but with circling dances, and the joy of songs. Thou art terrible indeed, yet thou dwelleth with Liberty, stern Genius! Borne on thy dark pinions over the swelling of Ocean, they return to their native country. There, by the side of fountains beneath citron-groves, the lovers tell to their beloved what horrors, being men, they had endured from men.

The infuriate spirits of the murdered make
Fierce merriment, and vengeance ask of Heaven.
Warmed with new influence, the unwholesome plain
Sent up its foulest fogs to meet the morn:
The Sun that rose on Freedom, rose in Blood!

"Maiden beloved, and Delegate of Heaven!
(To her the tutelary Spirit said)
Soon shall the morning struggle into day,
The stormy morning into cloudless noon.
Much hast thou seen, nor all canst understand—
But this be thy best omen—Save thy Country!"
Thus saying, from the answering Maid he passed,
And with him disappeared the heavenly Vision.

"Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!
All conscious Presence of the universe!
Nature's vast Ever-acting Energy!
In will, in deed, Impulse of All to All!
Whether Thy love with unrefracted ray
Beam on the Prophet's purged eye, or if
Diseasing realms the enthusiast, wild of thought,
Scatter new frenzies on the infected throng,
Thou both inspiring and predooming both,
Fit instruments and best, of perfect end:
Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!"

And first a landscape rose,
More wild and waste and desolate than where
The white bear, drifting on a field of ice,
Howls to her sundered cubs with piteous rage
And savage agony.

CHRISTABEL.

PREFACE.*

THE first part of the following poem was written in the year 1797, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year 1800, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as in my very first conception of the tale I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness no less than with the liveliness of a vision, I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year. It is probable, that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this, I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is amongst us a set of critics, who seem to hold, that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggrel version of two monkish Latin hexameters:—

* To the edition of 1816.

'Tis mine and it is likewise yours;
But an if this will not do;
Let it be mine, good friend! for I
Am the poorer of the two.

I have only to add, that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in the number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion.

PART I.

IS the middle of night by the castle
clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing
cock;
Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She makes answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, moonshine or shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.

The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
Dreams that made her moan and leap,
As on her bed she lay in sleep;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The breezes they were still also;
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air

To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
Her neck, her feet, her arms were bare;
And the jewels disordered in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel,) and who art thou?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear,
Said Christabel, how camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain in fits I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine:
And saying that she should command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And straight be convoyed, free from thrall,
Back to her noble father's hall.

So up she rose: and forth they passed
With hurrying steps, yet nothing fast;

Her lucky stars the lady blest,
And Christabel she sweetly said—
All our household are at rest,
Each one sleeping in his bed;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
So to my room we'll creep in stealth,
And you to-night must sleep with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the Lady by her side;
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.

The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet she bares,
And they are creeping up the stairs;
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,

Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answered—Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?

Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side——
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
And she is to sleep by Christabel!

She took two paces, and a stride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow.
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:

And didst bring her home with thee in love and in
charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I.



T was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, O call it fair, not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine

Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

PART II.



ACH matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the Bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borodale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between;—

But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they who thus had wronged the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—

(Ah! woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes uprised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine,
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared, she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.
"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy! the bard, the charger he thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,

And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.
And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And by mine honour! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing!—
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wondered what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old
tree.

"And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck,

Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine, in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And crouched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel——
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing, that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind;
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view—
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:

Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said: and more she could not say:
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
Dishonoured thus in his old age;
Dishonoured by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To th' insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy

Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

CONCLUSION TO PART II.



LITTLE child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.



KUBLA KHAN: OR, A VISION IN A DREAM.

A FRAGMENT.

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmore confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effect of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in "Purchas's Pilgrimage:" "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto: and thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter:—

Then all the charm
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo! he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Αὔριον ἄδιον ἄστυ: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

As a contrast to this vision, I have annexed a fragment of a very different character, describing with equal fidelity the dream of pain and disease.—1816.

KUBLA KHAN.



N Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,